



[Home](#) › [Statistics](#) › [People](#) › [Education](#) › [Qualifications and work](#) › 2018-19 financial year

## ✓ Latest release

# Qualifications and work

Detailed information about the educational qualifications people have studied and their relevance to current jobs.

Reference period 2018-19 financial year

Released 29/09/2020

### On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[Non-school qualifications](#)

[Relevance of highest non-school qualification to current job](#)

[Most relevant qualification to current job](#)

[Incomplete non-school qualifications](#)

[Qualifications of adult migrants](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Media releases](#)

## Key statistics

- In 2018-19, 63% of Australians aged 15-64 had a non-school qualification.
- 24% of people had multiple qualifications.
- 83% of people with a qualification had one that was relevant to their job.
- 2.6 million people (16%) had at least one incomplete qualification.

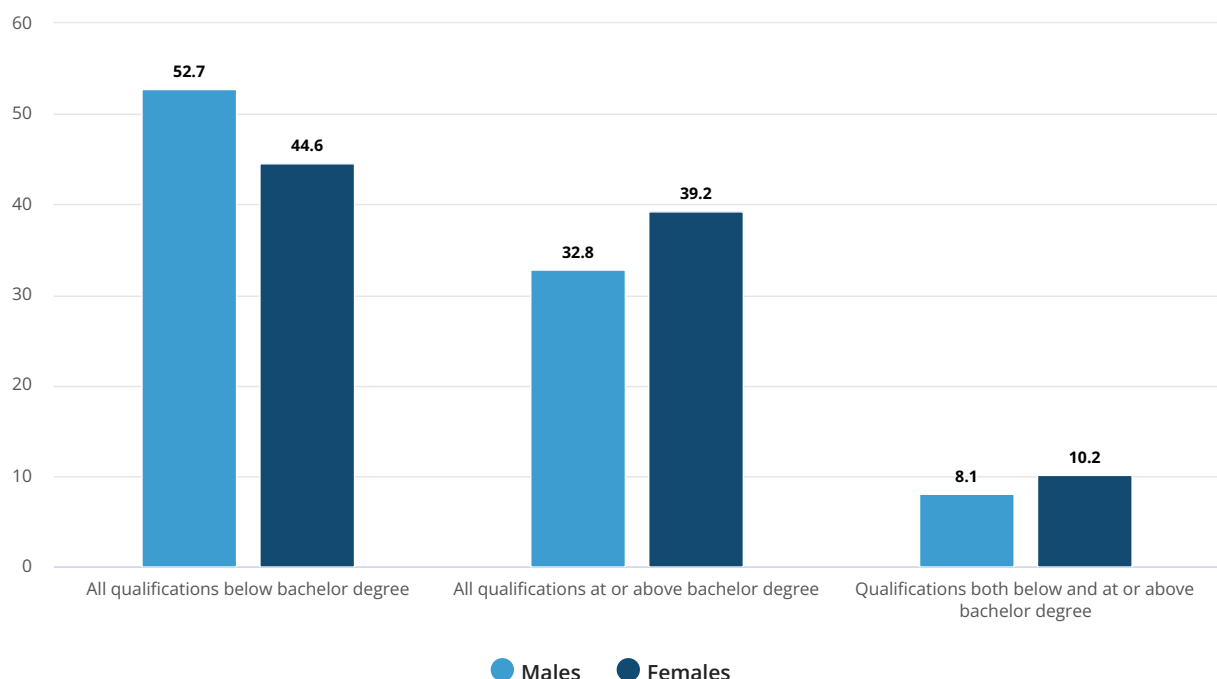
## Non-school qualifications

In 2018-19, around 10.2 million Australians aged 15-64 years (63%) had a non-school qualification (a certificate, diploma or degree), while 2.2 million (13%) were currently studying in a non-school institution such as a university or TAFE (see Note 1).

Nearly half (49%) of people with one or more qualifications had qualifications that were all below a bachelor degree, such as a certificate I/IV, a diploma or an associate degree. One in three (36%) had qualifications at bachelor degree level or above, such as a graduate certificate, graduate diploma or other postgraduate degree, while 10% had a combination of qualifications both below, and at or above, bachelor degree level.

Men were more likely to have all their qualifications below bachelor degree level than women (53% compared with 45% of women), while women were more likely to have all their qualifications at bachelor level and above (39% compared with 33% of men).

## 1: Combination of completed non-school qualification levels, by sex(a)

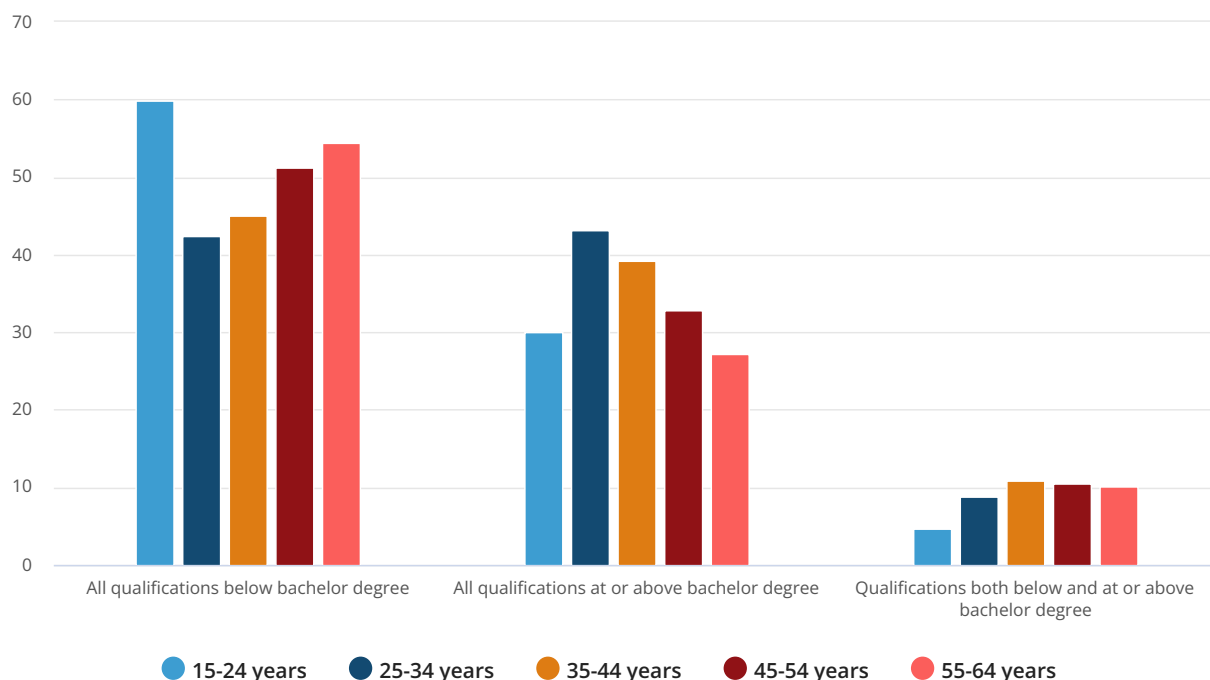


(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 5

People aged 25-34 years were the most likely to have all their qualifications at or above bachelor degree level (43%), while those aged 15-24 and 55-64 years were the most likely to have all their qualifications below bachelor degree level (60% and 54% respectively).

## 2: Combination of completed qualification levels, by age group(a)



(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 5

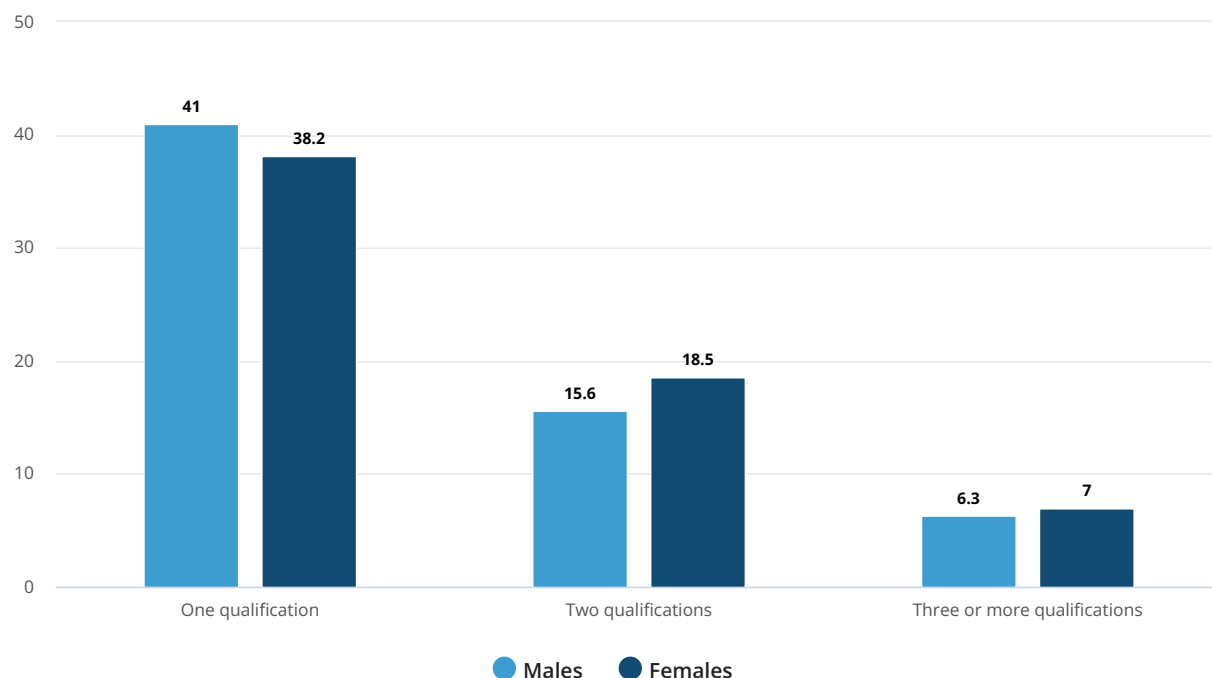
10% of people with at least one qualification were currently studying in a non-school institution for another, setting them up to join the 3.8 million Australians aged 15-64 with multiple qualifications.

### Multiple qualifications

Around 40% of Australians aged 15-64 years had one qualification, while 24% had multiple qualifications (17% with two qualifications and 7% with three or more).

Just over two in five men had one qualification (41% compared with 38% of women), while women were slightly more likely to have two qualifications (19% compared with 16%). Men and women were just about equally likely to have three or more qualifications (6% and 7% respectively).

### 3: Number of non-school qualifications, by sex(a)

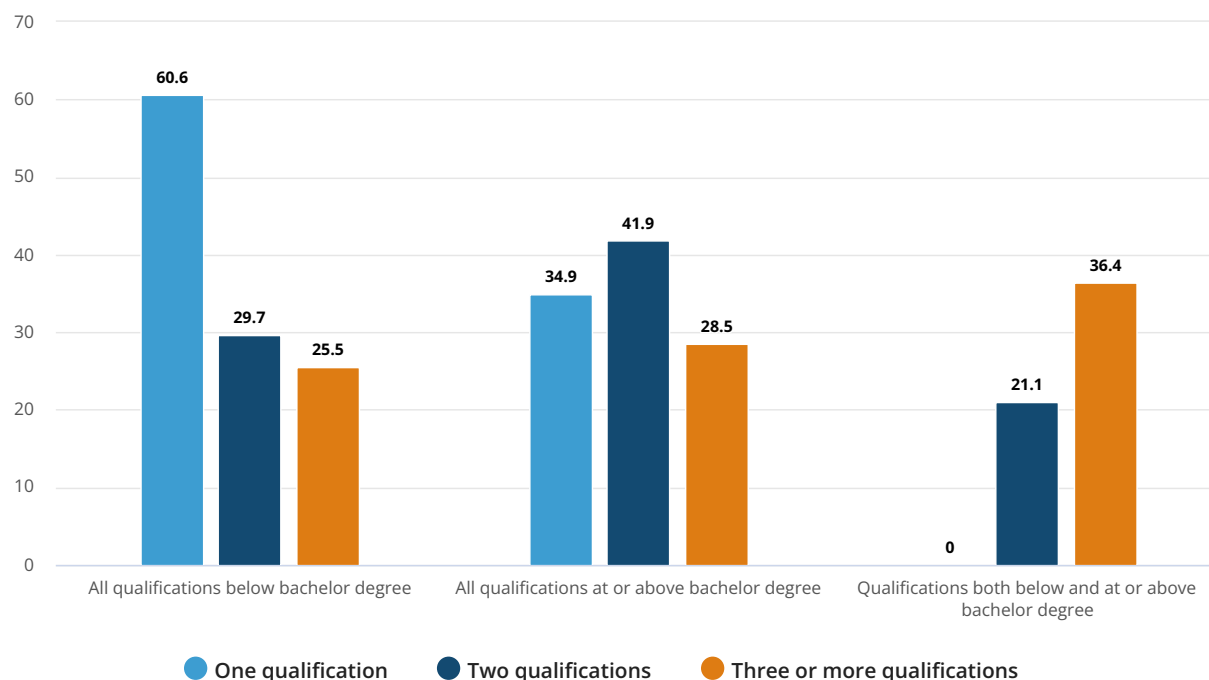


(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 3

People with one qualification only were most likely to have a qualification below a bachelor degree (61%). Those with two qualifications were most likely to have qualifications at or above bachelor degree level (42%), and those with three or more were most likely to have a combination both below and at or above bachelor degree level (36%).

#### 4: Combination of completed qualification levels, by number of qualifications(a)(b)



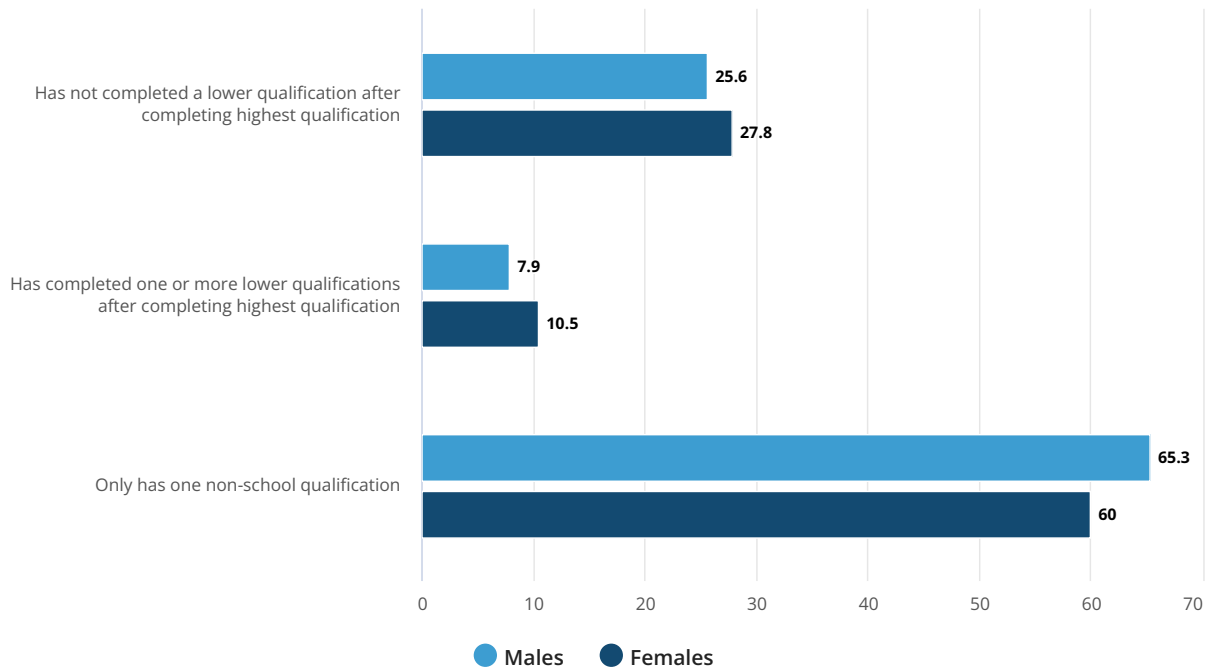
(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

(b) It is not possible for people with one qualification only to have qualifications both below, and at or above, bachelor degree level.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 5

Women with one or more qualifications were more likely to have completed a lower level qualification after completing a higher qualification (11% compared with 8% of men).

## 5: Whether completed a lower level qualification after a higher level qualification, by sex(a)



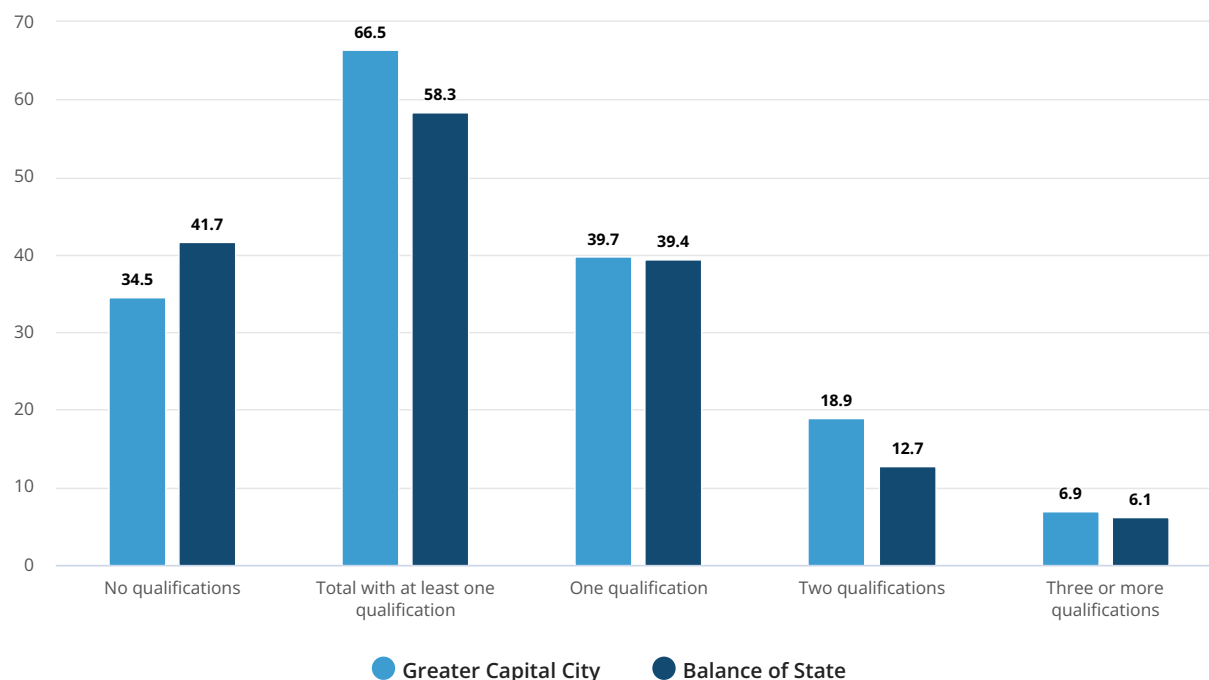
(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

## Non-school qualifications by geography and disadvantage

Overall, people living in capital cities were more likely to have a non-school qualification than those living in the rest of Australia (66% compared with 58%). While proportions with one qualification were similar for both these groups (40% and 39% respectively), those living in a capital city were more likely to have two qualifications (19% compared with 13%), with rates converging again for three or more qualifications (7% compared with 6%).

## 6: Number of non-school qualifications, by capital city and balance of state(a)

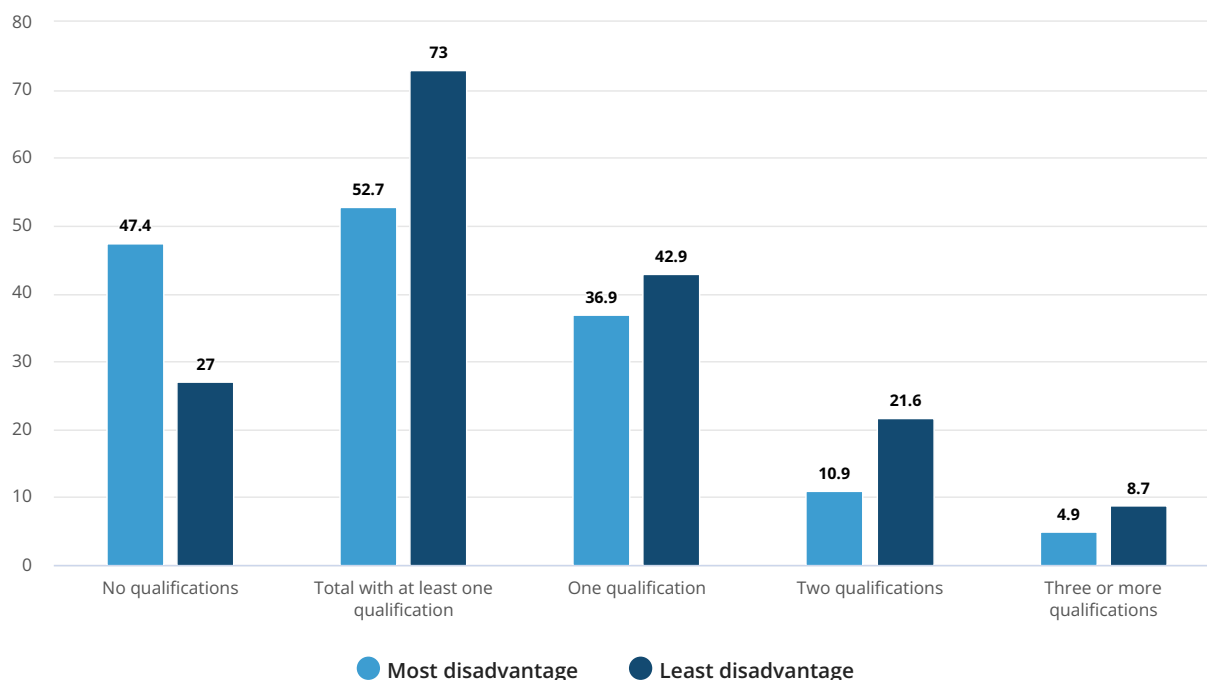


(a) People aged 15-64 years.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

People living in the most advantaged socio-economic areas were more likely to have a qualification than those living in areas of greater disadvantage (73% compared with 53%). This disparity held true for those with one (43% compared with 37%), two (22% compared with 11%) and three or more qualifications (9% compared with 5%).

## 7: Number of non-school qualifications, by SEIFA index of disadvantage(a) (b)



(a) People aged 15-64 years.

(b) Most disadvantaged are those in the lowest quintile of the SEIFA index, while least disadvantaged are those in the highest quintile.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

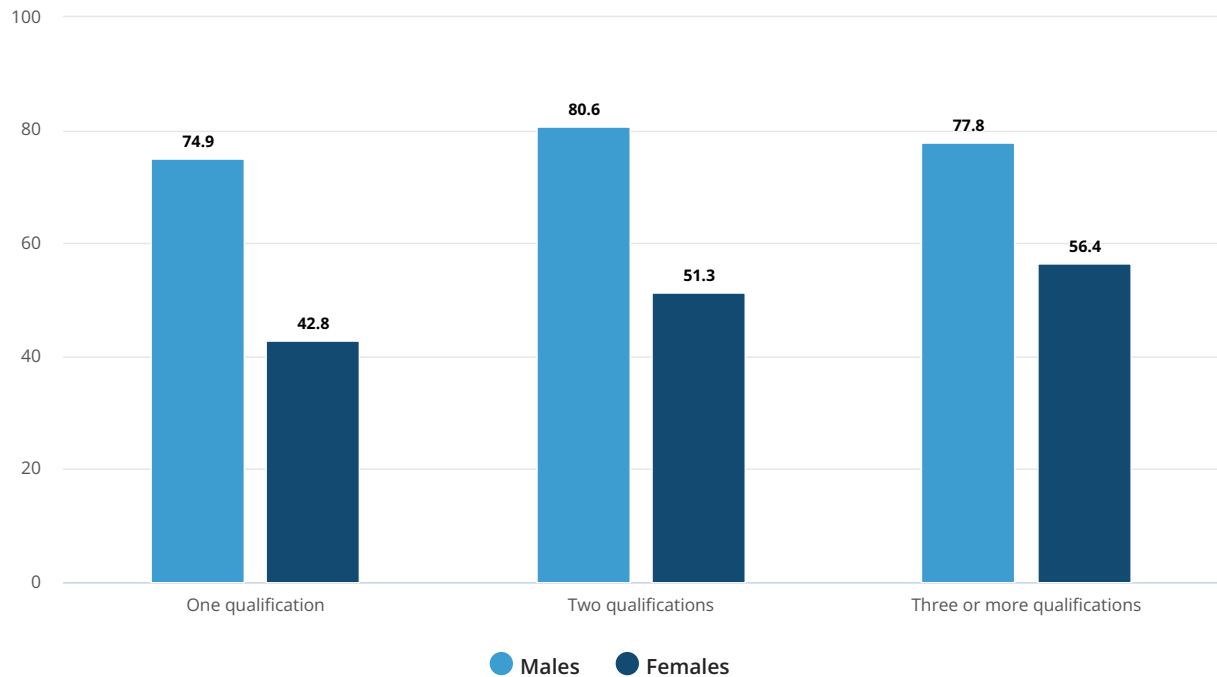
## Non-school qualifications and Labour Force Status

Overall, men were more likely to work full-time than women, a pattern which remained the case regardless of how many qualifications a person had completed. However, the gap between men and women narrowed as the number of qualifications they had completed increased.

Three in four (75%) men with one non-school qualification worked full time, as did 81% of those with two qualifications and 78% of those with three or more. For women, rates of working full-time increased from 43% of those with one qualification to 51% of those with two qualifications and 56% of those with three or more qualifications.



## 8: Full-time employed people - number of non-school qualifications, by

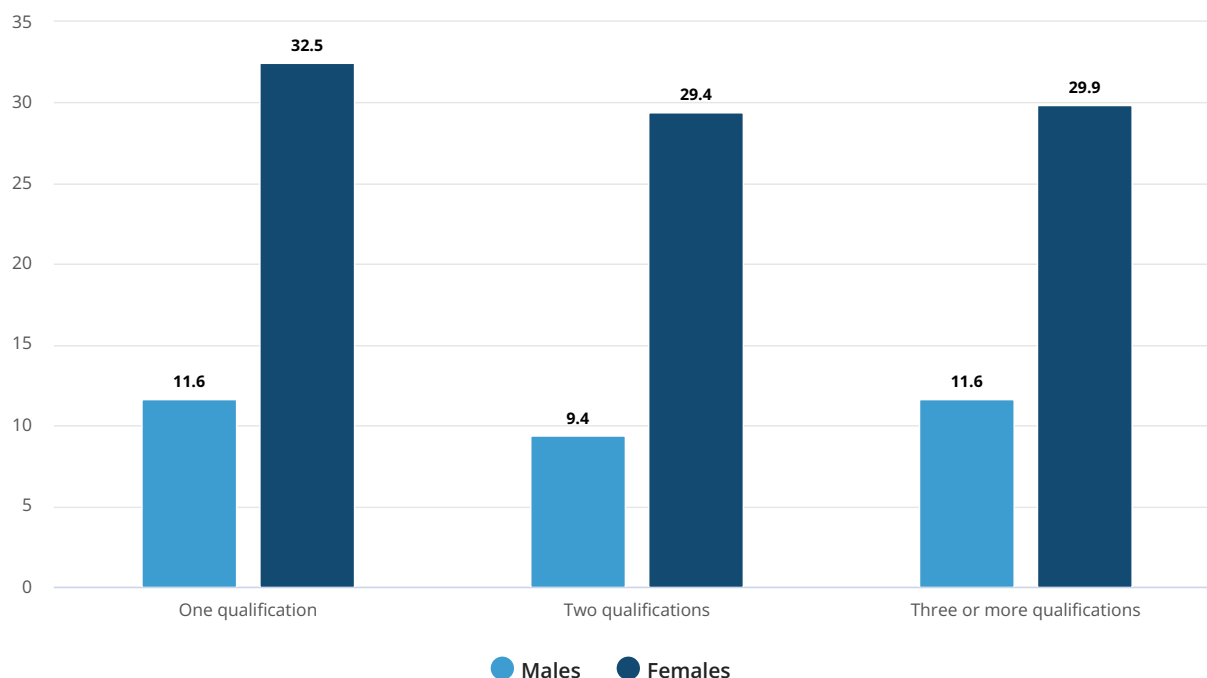


(a) People aged 15-64 years who were employed full-time.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 1

Women had a higher rate of part-time employment than men. Number of qualifications completed only had a small impact on the rate of part-time employment, remaining relatively stable across the groups for both men and women.

## 9: Part-time employed people - number of non-school qualifications, by sex(a)



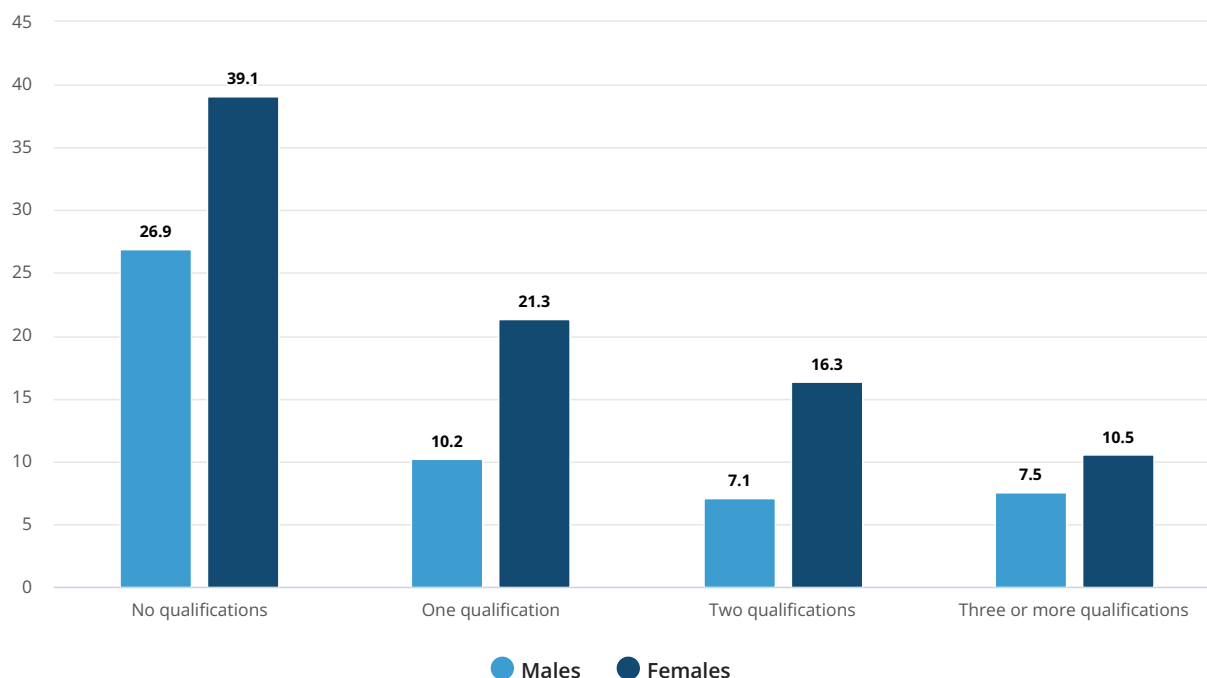
(a) People aged 15-64 years who were employed part-time.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 1

Men with multiple qualifications were slightly less likely to be out of the labour force (7% of those with two and 8% of those with three or more qualifications) than men with one (10%) or none (27%). Women with multiple qualifications, however, were much less likely to be out of the labour force than women with one or no qualifications: around 16% of women with two qualifications and 11% with three or more were not in the labour force, compared with 21% of those with one qualification and 39% of those with no qualifications.

Women with three or more qualifications were about as likely to be out of the labour force as men with one qualification.

## 10: People not in the labour force - number of non-school qualifications, by sex(a)



(a) People aged 15-64 years who were not in the labour force (neither employed nor unemployed).

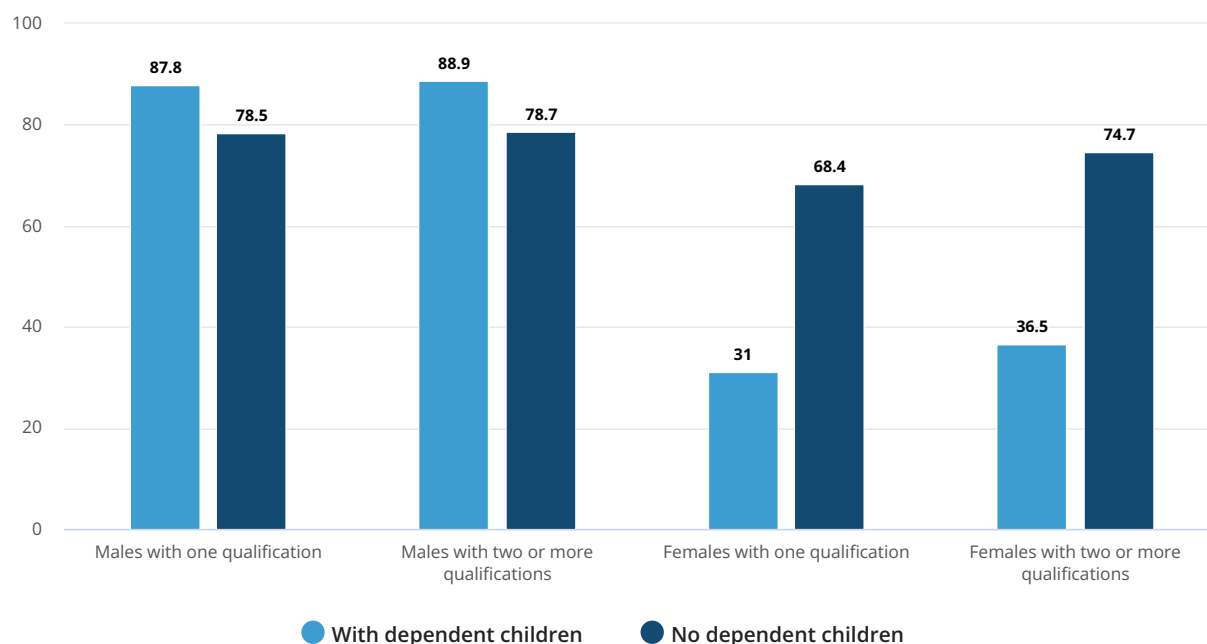
Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 1

### Effect of dependent children

Women aged 25-44 years with dependent children were less than half as likely as those without dependent children to be employed full-time (31% compared with 68%), however they were more likely to be employed full-time if they had multiple qualifications than if they had one qualification (37% compared with 31%). This compares with 75% and 68% respectively of women without dependent children.

Number of qualifications made little difference for men aged 25-44 with dependent children, however - 89% of those with multiple qualifications and 88% with one qualification worked full-time. Men were more likely to work full time if they had dependent children than if they did not, but again number of qualifications made little difference - 79% each of men with multiple or single qualifications who had no dependent children worked full-time.

## 11: People employed full-time - number of non-school qualifications by



(a) People aged 25-44 years who were employed full time.

(b) Dependent children are children aged 0-14 years.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

## Underemployment

People aged 15-64 years with multiple qualifications that were all below bachelor degree level were more likely (9%) to be underemployed, (that is, they would have preferred and were available to work more hours than they did), than those with one qualification only that was below bachelor degree level (7%). They were also more likely to be underemployed than those with multiple qualifications at or above bachelor degree level (4%), or those with one qualification only at or above bachelor degree level (4%), and those with multiple qualifications both below, and at or above, bachelor degree level (6%).

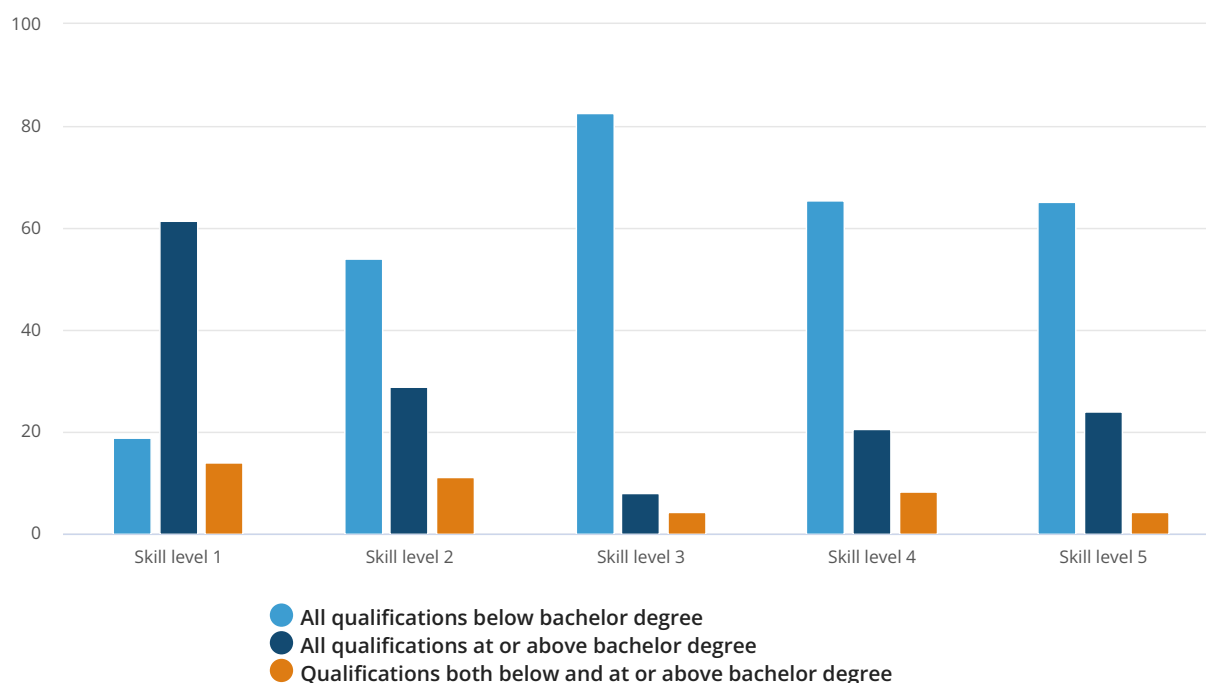
## Skill level of current job

People with jobs at skill level 1 (the highest skill level, including occupations such as

pharmacists, architects, school principals etc.) were the most likely to have qualifications at bachelor degree and above (61%) and the most likely to have a combination of qualifications (both below, and at or above bachelor degree level) (14%). People with jobs at skill level 2 (e.g. Agricultural Technicians, Medical Laboratory Technicians, Quarantine Officers etc.) were the next most likely to have qualifications all at bachelor level or above, but they were more likely to have qualifications all below bachelor degree level, as were people with jobs at skill levels 3 to 5. People with jobs at skill level 3 (e.g. plumbers, hair dressers, butchers etc.) were the most likely to have qualifications below bachelor degree (83%).

People with jobs at skill level 4 (e.g. receptionists, delivery drivers, miners) and 5 (the lowest skill level including occupations such as telemarketers, concreters, domestic cleaners etc.) were more likely (21% and 24% respectively) to have all qualifications at or above bachelor degree than people with jobs in skill level 3 (8%).

## 12: Combination of qualifications completed, by skill level of current job(a)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

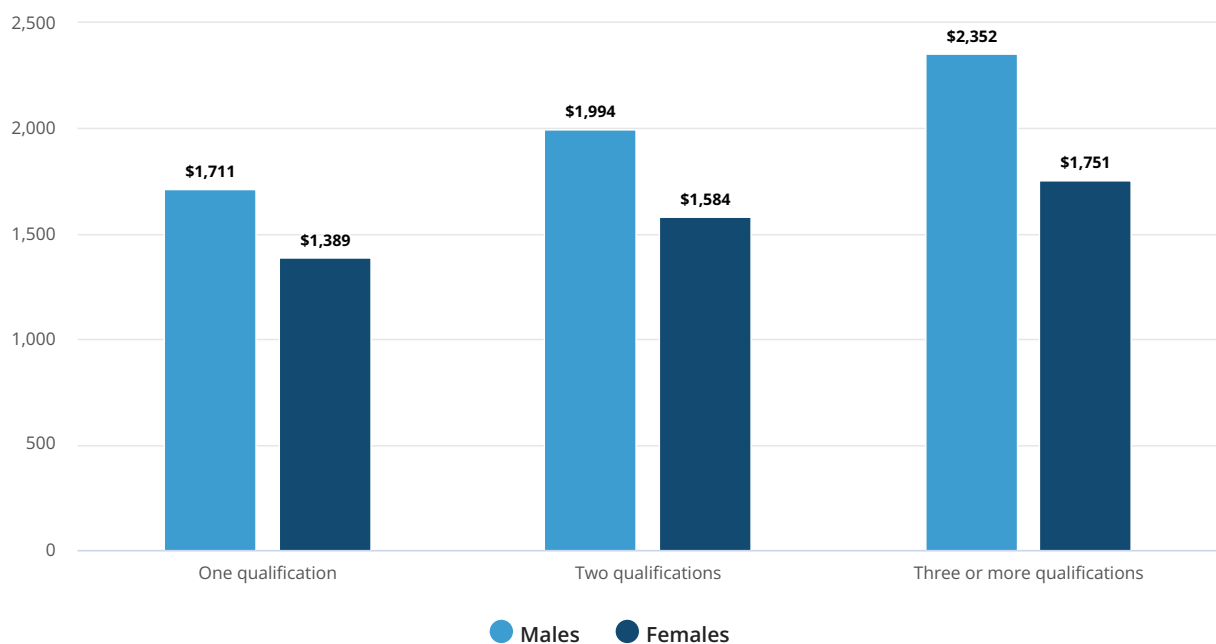
Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

## Weekly personal income

Men who worked full-time had higher average weekly personal incomes than women who worked full-time, a pattern that was not significantly affected by number of qualifications. In fact, women with three or more qualifications working full-time had an average weekly income that was similar to men with one qualification working full-time (\$1751 compared with \$1711).

Men with one qualification had an average weekly personal income of \$1711 compared with \$1389 for women with one qualification - a difference of \$322 per week. These averages were \$1994 and \$1584 respectively for those with two qualifications (a difference of \$410 per week), and \$2352 and \$1751 respectively for those with three or more qualifications (a difference of \$601 per week).

### 13: People employed full-time, Number of qualifications completed, by average weekly personal income, by sex(a)



(a) Full-time employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 2

For full-time employed people with multiple qualifications, the discrepancies by gender in income began to be noticeable in the 25 to 34 years age group. Average weekly personal income was similar for men and women with multiple qualifications aged 15 to 24 years (\$1,124 compared with \$1,101). However, for those aged 25 and older, the average weekly personal incomes of men were higher than those of women in each age group.

#### 14: People with multiple qualifications employed full-time, by average weekly personal income, by sex(a)

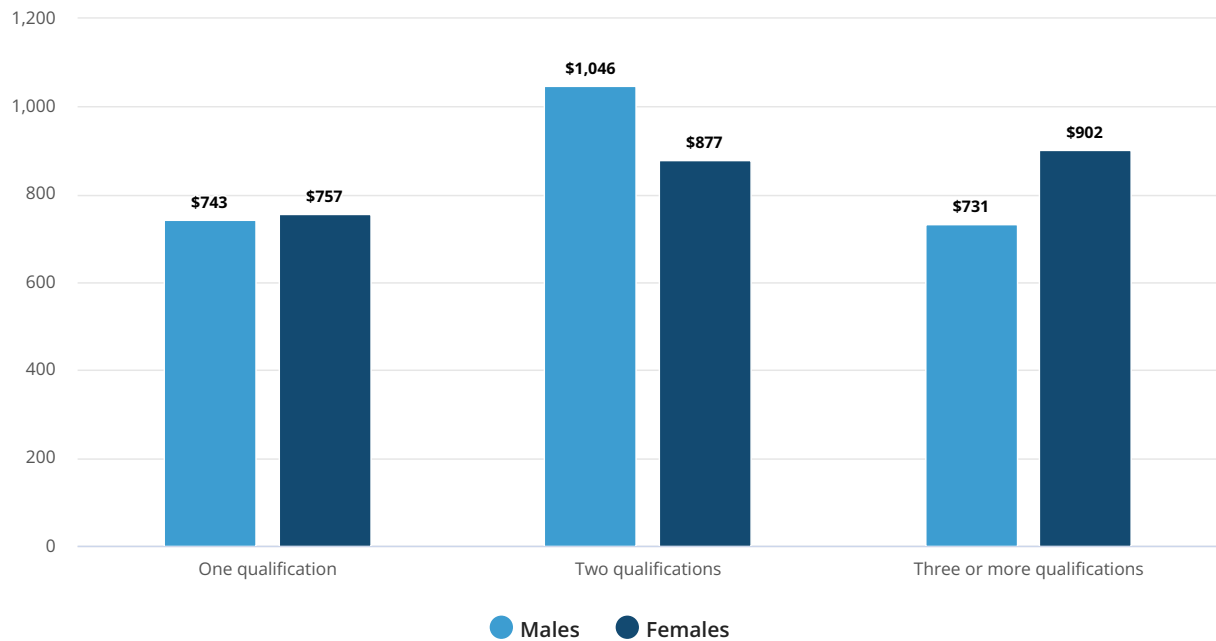


(a) Full-time employed people aged 15-64 years with two or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

There was less disparity overall between men and women who worked part-time. Men with one qualification who worked part-time had similar average weekly personal incomes to women with one qualification (\$743 compared with \$757 per week). Men working part-time with two non-school qualifications had higher incomes on average than their female counterparts (\$1046 compared with \$877), but men working part-time with three or more non-school qualifications had lower incomes on average than women with three or more qualification working part-time (\$731 compared with \$902).

### 15: People employed part-time, Number of qualifications completed, by average weekly personal income, by sex(a)



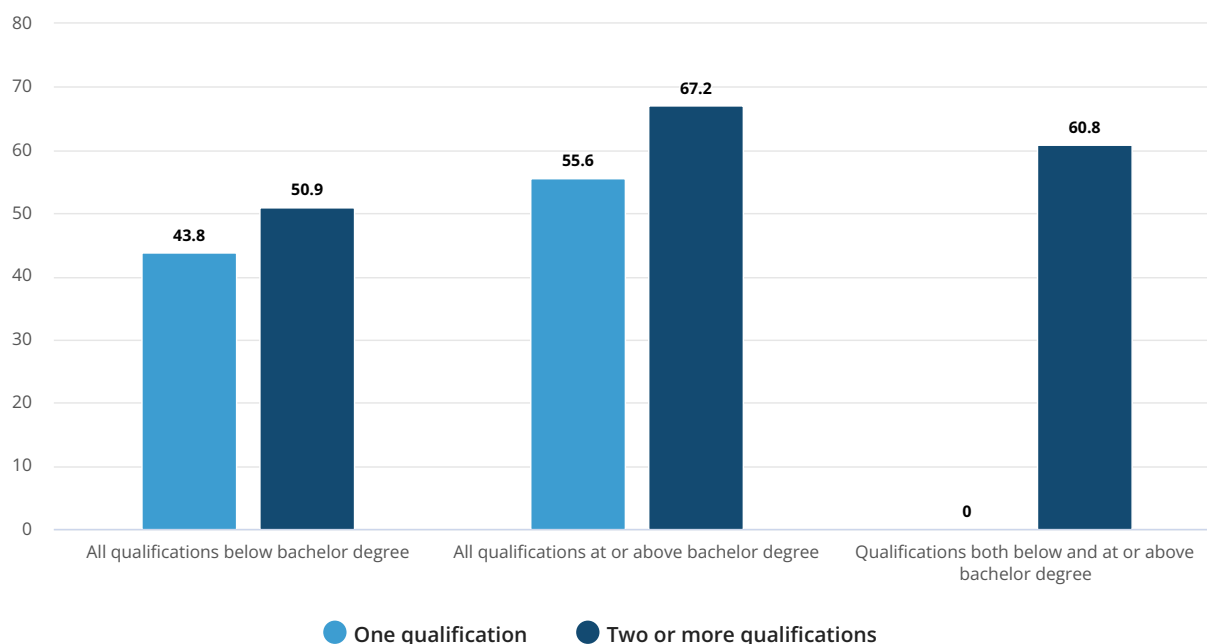
(a) Full-time employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 2

People with two or more qualifications all at or above bachelor degree level were a little more likely to have higher weekly personal incomes than those who had a combination of qualifications both below, and at or above bachelor degree level (67% compared with 61% in the highest two quintiles for personal weekly income). People with all their qualifications below bachelor degree level, however, were more likely to be in the highest two quintiles if they had two or more qualifications (51%) than if they only had one (44%).



## 16: People in the two highest weekly income quintiles, Combination of qualifications completed by number of qualifications completed(a)



(a) People aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

(b) It is not possible for people with one qualification only to have qualifications both below, and at or above, bachelor degree level.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

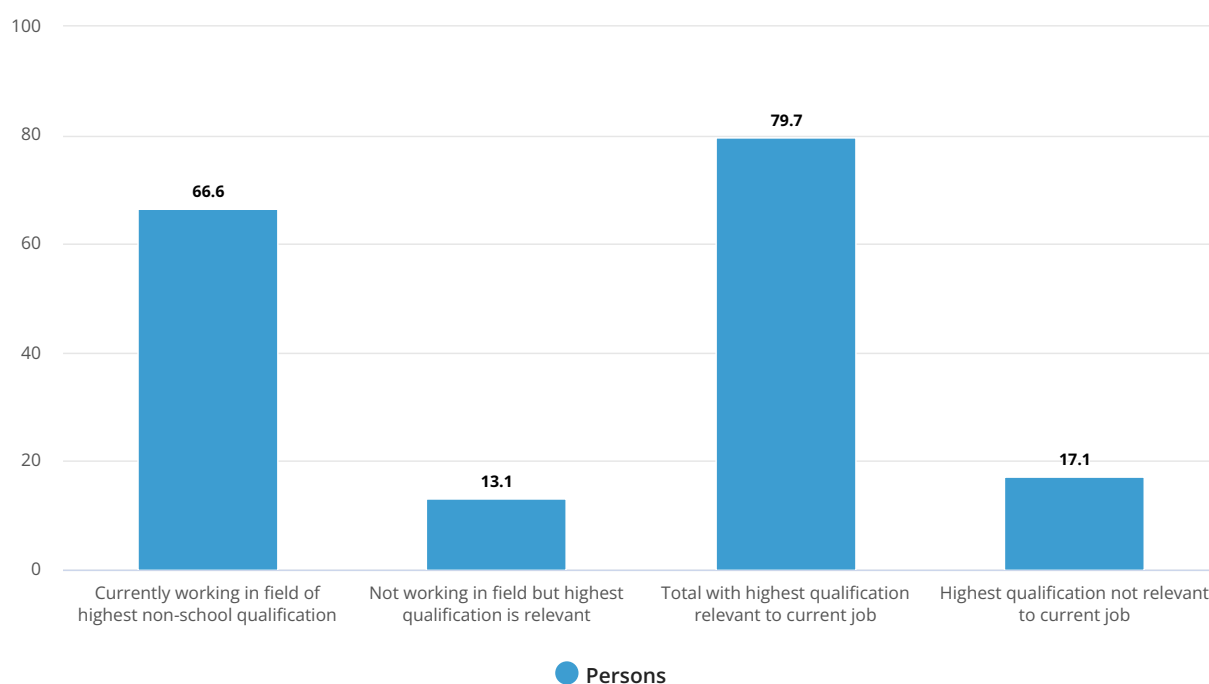
### Notes

1. Q&W data for people with a non-school qualification and those who are currently studying reflect the results from [Education and Work, Australia, 2019 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/latest-release\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/latest-release) - the primary ABS annual survey on highest non-school qualifications and current study - which showed that 63% of Australians aged 15-64 years had at least one non-school qualification while 14% were currently studying for one.

## Relevance of highest non-school qualification to current job

Overall, 6.7 million employed Australians aged 15-64 with a non-school qualification (80%) worked in a job in which their highest level qualification was relevant. That is, they either worked in the field of their highest qualification (67%) or they reported that their highest qualification was at least somewhat relevant to their job (13%).

## 17: Relevance of highest non-school qualification to current job(a)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source(s): Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 6

There were no particular differences by gender for whether people's highest qualifications were relevant to their jobs, however younger people's highest qualifications were less likely to be relevant than those of people aged 25 or over (66% of those aged 15-24 years compared with more than 80% of people in all other age groups).

Adult migrants (people who had moved to Australia aged 15 years or over) were less likely to be working in jobs where their highest qualifications were relevant (75%) than people born in Australia (82%), although adult migrants who gained their highest qualification in an Australian institution were more likely to be doing so (80%) than those who gained their

highest qualification overseas (70%). There was no noticeable difference between child migrants (people who moved to Australia aged less than 15 years) and people born in Australia.

Australian citizens were more likely to be working in jobs where their highest qualifications were relevant than people who were not Australian citizens. Four fifths (81%) of employed people aged 15-64 who were Australian citizens had a job in the field of their highest qualification or a job in which their highest qualification was at least somewhat relevant compared with only 70% of employed people who were not Australian citizens.

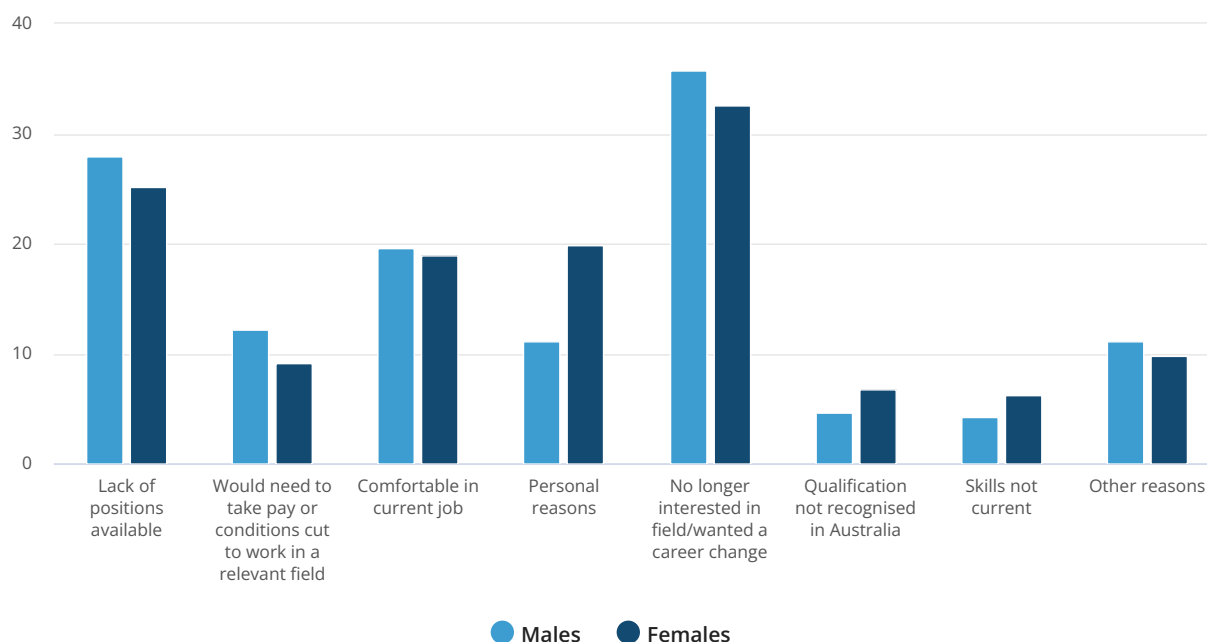
Around three in five (59%) employed people who spoke a language other than English at home were working in the field of their highest qualification, compared with 69% of those who only spoke English at home.

### **Reasons not working in a job in which field of highest non-school qualification was relevant**

The most common reason most people were not working in a job where their highest qualification was relevant was that they were no longer interested in that particular field or wanted a career change (34%). This was followed by a lack of positions available in their field (27%), or that they were comfortable in their current job (19%).

One in five employed women were not working in a field where their highest qualification was relevant due to personal reasons (20% compared with 11% of men).

## 18: Reasons not working in a job in which field of highest non-school qualification was relevant, by sex(a)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source(s): Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 7

Younger people were more likely to find a lack of positions a problem than older people: one third (33%) of employed people aged 25-34 did not work in a field where their highest qualification was relevant due to a lack of positions available, compared with 20% of those aged 55-64 years. Lack of available jobs was also a prevalent reason for people whose highest qualification was at the post-graduate level (37%, compared with 33% of those whose highest qualification was a bachelor degree and 21% of those whose highest qualifications were below bachelor degree level).

Loss of interest in the field or wanting a career change was the most common reason for not working in a relevant field for people whose highest qualification was below a bachelor degree (39%). This was also the main reason for around half of all professionals (51%) and managers (47%); around a quarter of community and personal service workers, sales workers, machinery operators and drivers, and labourers; and two in five technicians and

trades workers or clerical and administrative workers (39% each).

## **Income and skill levels**

The vast majority (94%) of people working at the highest skill level (skill level 1) were working in a job where their highest qualification was relevant. This compares with only two in five people (41%) working at the lowest skill level.

Around 40% of employed people aged 15-64 working in the same field as their highest qualification and 35% of those whose highest qualification was at least somewhat relevant to their current job had a weekly personal income within the top 20% of the population. Fewer than a fifth (18%) of those whose highest qualification was not relevant in their current role had an income at this level.

## **Most relevant qualification to current job**

Non-school qualifications (certificates, diplomas and degrees) are considered relevant if the person reported they were working in the field of a qualification, or, if they were not working in the field of any qualification, that a qualification was at least somewhat relevant to their current job. People with multiple qualifications were asked which qualification was the most relevant to their current job. If people only had one qualification, and it was relevant to their job, it was considered to be their most relevant qualification.

In 2018-19, of the 8.4 million employed Australians aged 15-64 with one or more non-school qualifications, 83% (7 million) had a qualification that they considered most relevant to their current job. 1.2 million people (14%) reported that none of their qualifications were relevant to their current job. For just under three in five (59%) employed people with multiple qualifications, their most relevant qualification was their highest qualification.

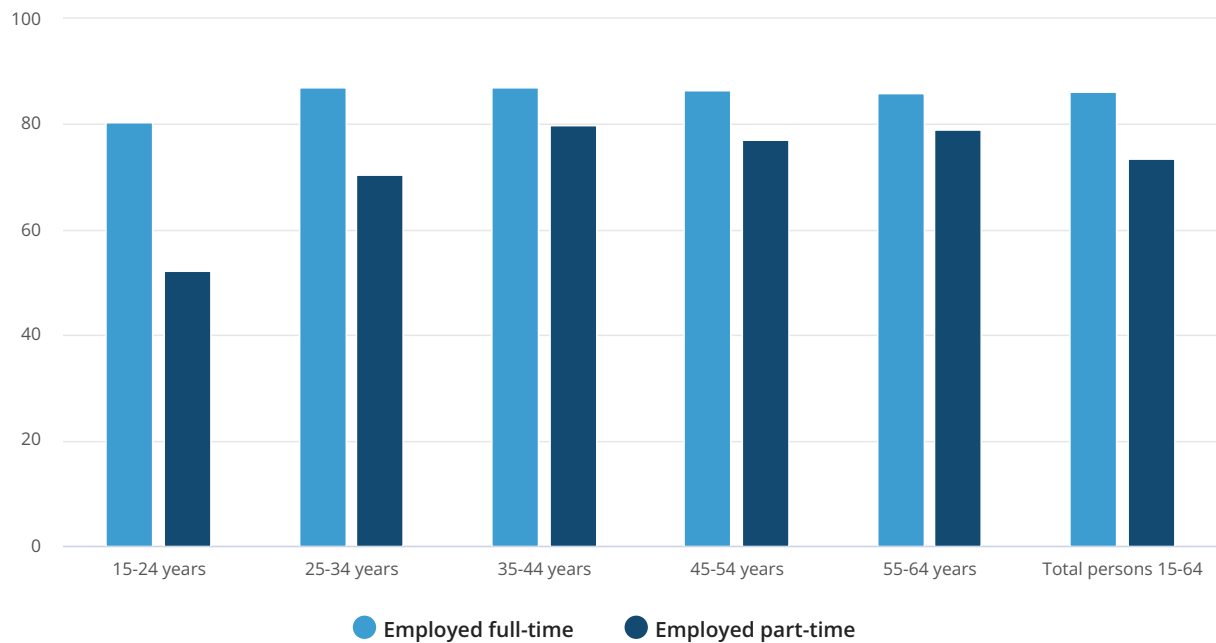
Unsurprisingly, the more qualifications people had, the more likely they were to have a qualification that was most relevant to their current job. Just over three quarters (77%) of those with one non-school qualification had a qualification that was most relevant to their current job, increasing to 92% of those with two qualifications, and 95% of those with three or more qualifications. Only 5% of people with three or more qualifications were working in a job in which none of their qualifications were relevant.

Around 28% of people with a qualification most relevant to their current job had completed that qualification within the last 5 years. These people were slightly more likely to be working in the field of their most relevant qualification than those who completed their most relevant qualification more than 5 years ago (90% compared with 86%).

People working full-time were more likely to have a most relevant qualification than those

working part-time (86% compared with 73%).

### 19: Has non-school qualification most relevant to current job, by full-time/part-time employment status, by age(a)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with a qualification that is most relevant to their current job.

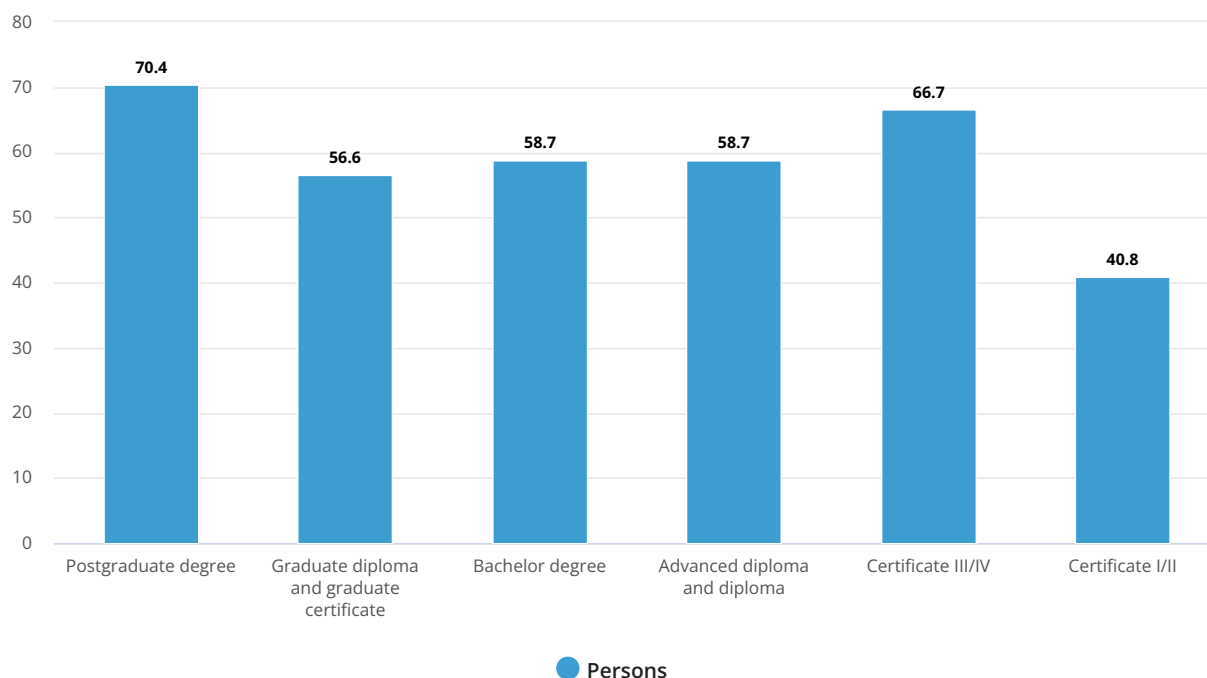
Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

Women with one or more non-school qualifications working part-time were more likely to be working in the field of their most relevant qualification than their male counterparts (65% compared with 49%).

### Level and field of most relevant qualification

People with a post graduate degree or a certificate III/IV were the most likely to report these qualifications as their most relevant qualification to their current jobs (70% and 67% respectively).

## 20: Most relevant non-school qualification to current job, by level(a)



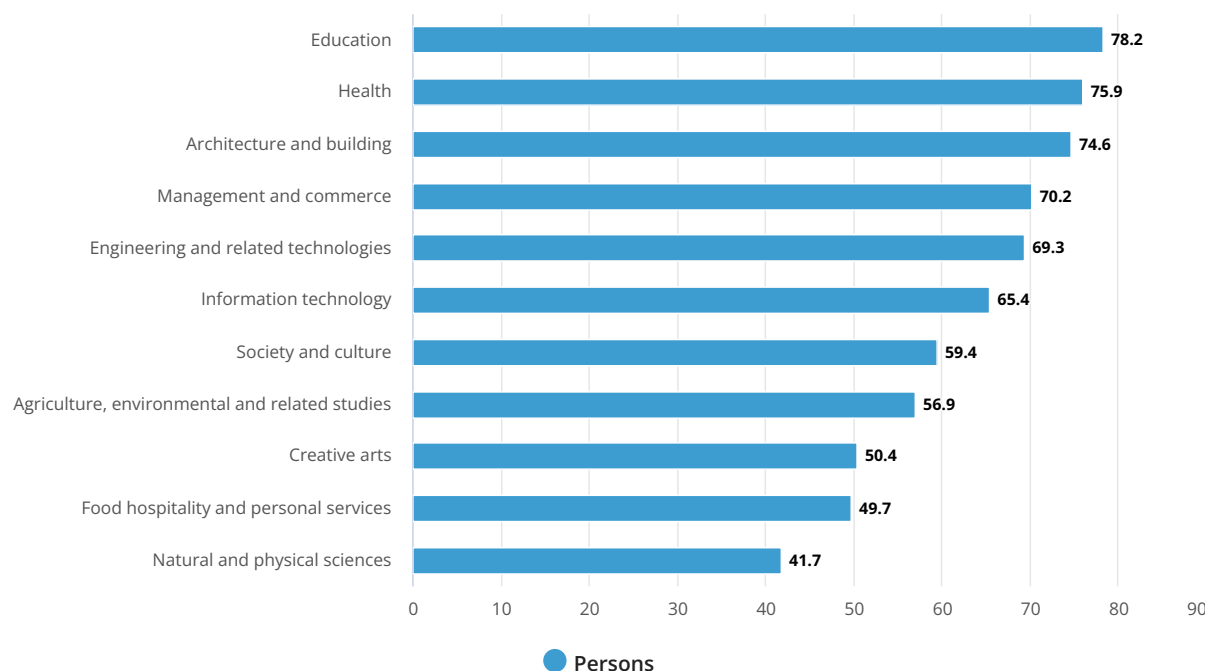
(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 15

People with qualifications in education, health or architecture and building were the most likely to report these as most relevant to their jobs (78%, 76% and 75% respectively), while those with qualifications in the creative arts, food hospitality and personal services, or natural and physical sciences (such as botany, geology, chemistry etc), were the least likely to do so (50%, 50% and 42% respectively).

Overall, people with qualifications in education (78%) were nearly twice as likely to report they were the most relevant to their current job as those with qualifications in natural and physical sciences (42%).

## 21: Most relevant non-school qualification to current job, by main field of study(a)(b)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

(b) Excludes mixed field programmes.

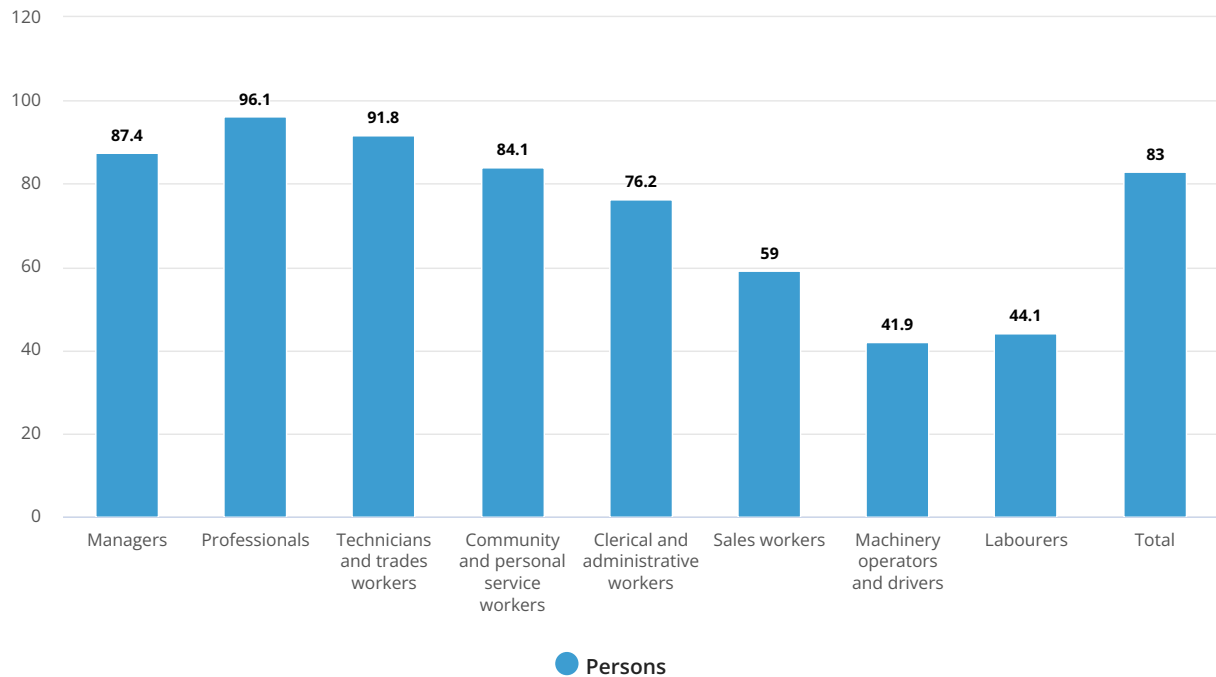
Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 15

## Occupation and industry of most relevant qualification

More than four in five professionals (96%), technicians and trades workers (92%), managers (87%) and community and personal service workers (84%) with one or more non-school qualifications had a qualification that was most relevant to their current job, compared with 59% of sales workers, 44% of labourers, and 42% of machinery operators and drivers.



## 22: Has non-school qualification most relevant to current job, by occupation(a)

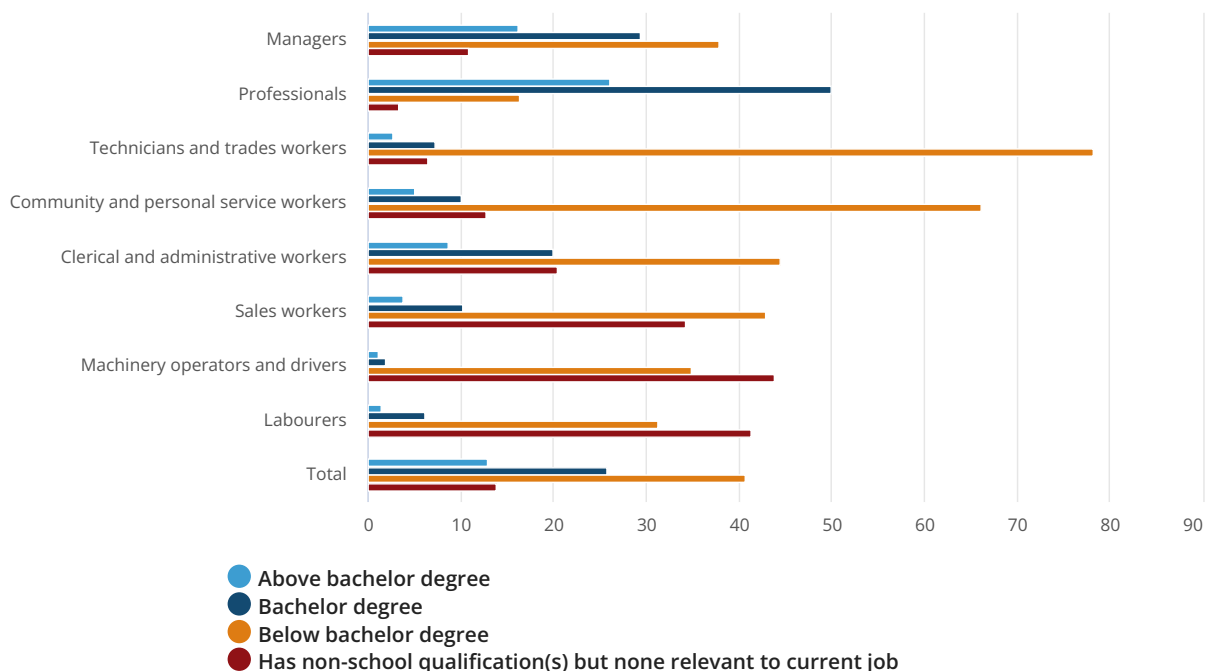


(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 13

Over two thirds (69%) of technicians and trades workers with a non-school qualification had only one qualification and that qualification was relevant to their job. These qualifications were most likely (78%) to be below bachelor degree level, which was the case for most occupations. The exception was for professionals, where bachelor degrees (50%) and qualifications above bachelor level (26%) made up the bulk of qualifications relevant to their jobs. Machinery operators and drivers had the highest proportion of qualifications not relevant to their current jobs (44%).

## 23: Level of non-school qualification most relevant to current job, by occupation(a)



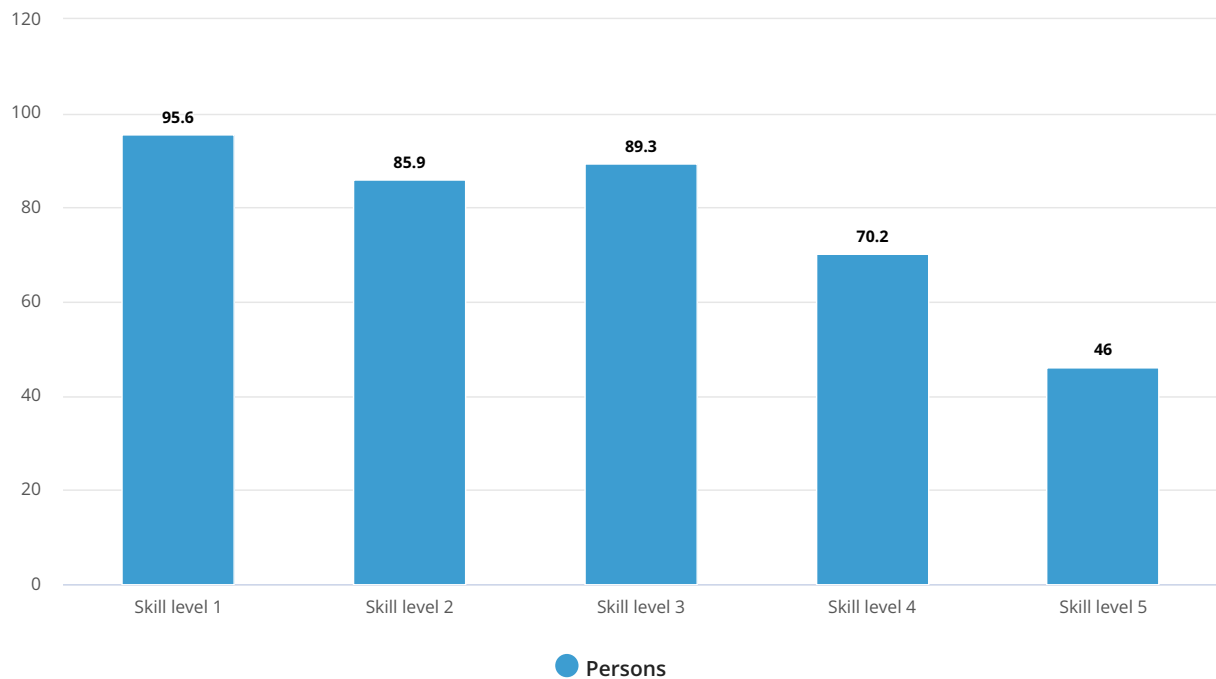
(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 13

Around 62% of technicians and trades workers reported a qualification in engineering and related technologies or architecture and building as being the most relevant qualification to their job. Management and commerce was reported as the most relevant qualification for people working as clerical and administrative workers (48%) and managers (38%).

People whose job required a higher skill level were more likely to have a qualification most relevant to their current job (96%) than those in the lowest skilled jobs (46%).

## 24: Has a non-school qualification most relevant to current job, by skill level of current job(a)

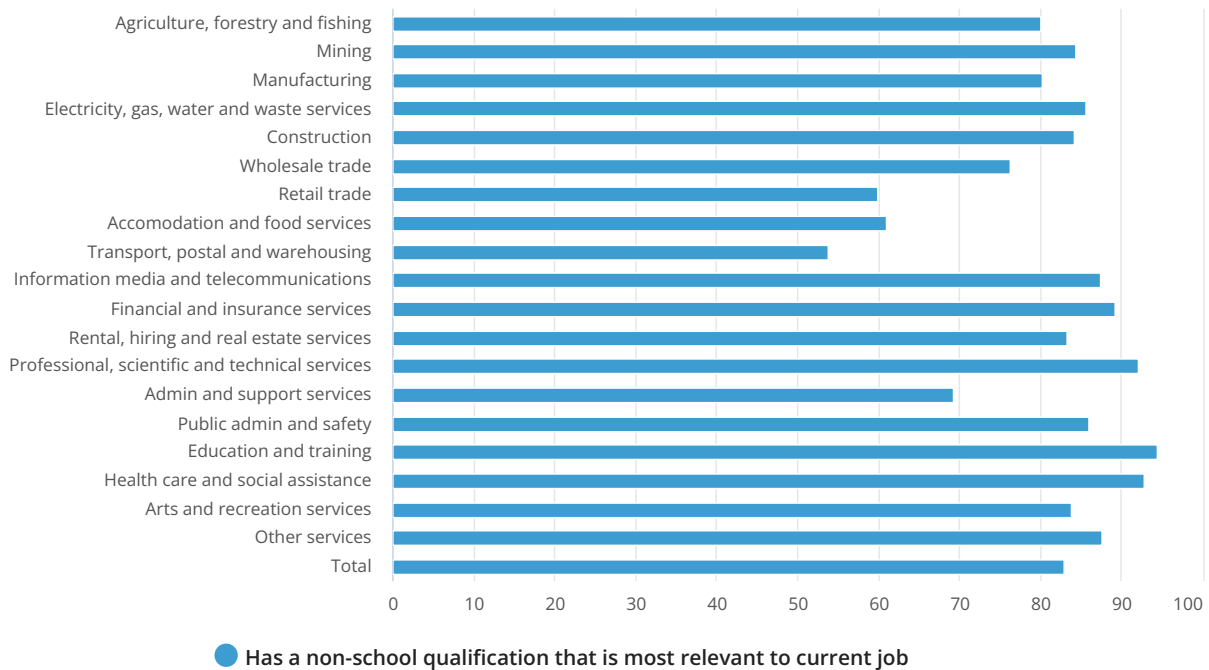


(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 12

Just over half of people who were currently working in transport, postal and warehousing industries (54%) had a qualification most relevant to their current job, followed by 60% of those in retail trade and 61% of people working in accommodation and food services. This was lower than for all other industries. Over 90% of people working in education and training (95%), health care and social assistance (93%), and professional, scientific and technical services (92%) had a qualification they reported to be the most relevant to their current job.

## 25: Has a non-school qualification most relevant to current job, by industry(a)

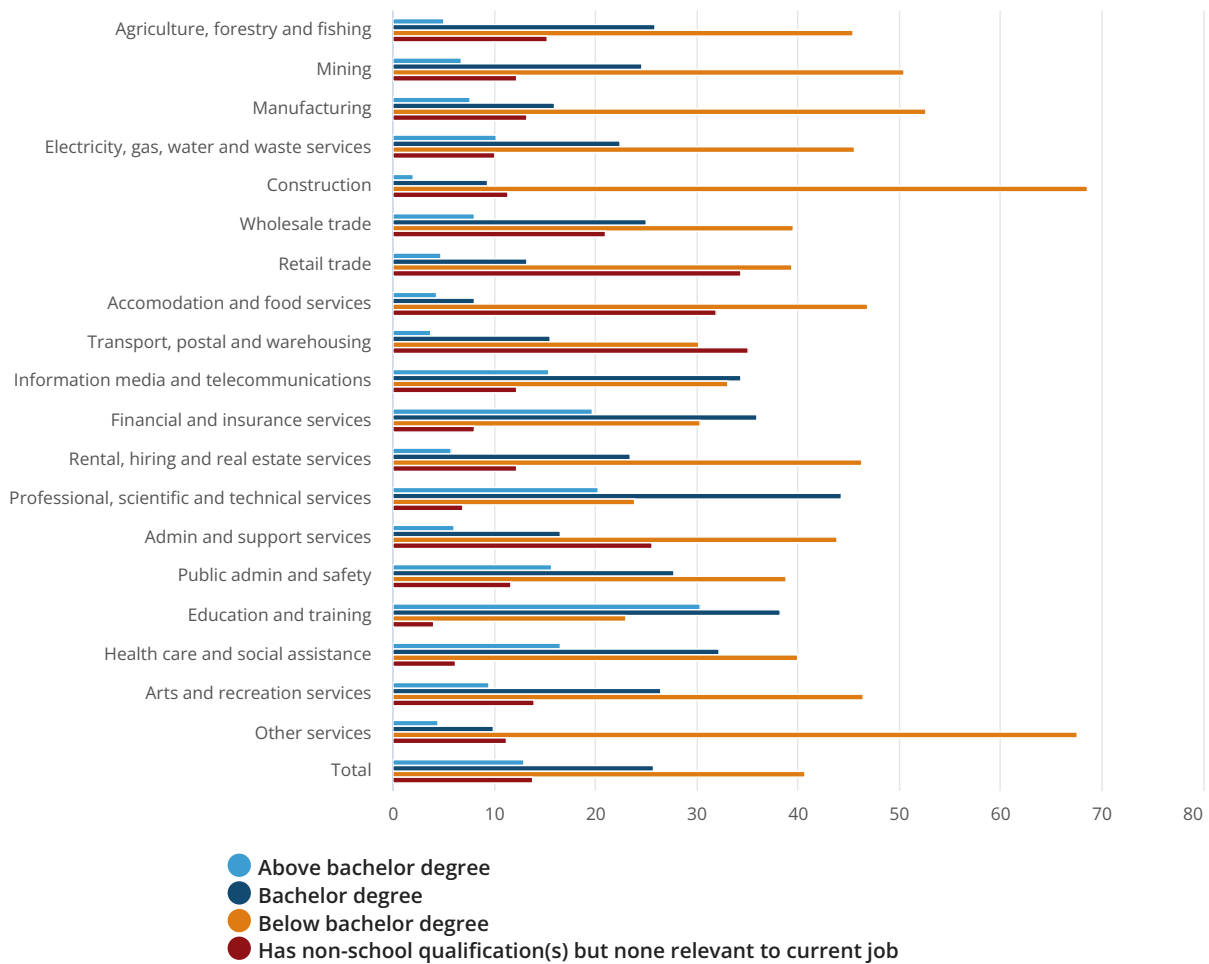


(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 14

Close to half (44%) of people in professional, scientific and technical services rated a bachelor degree as the most relevant qualification to their current job, followed by 38% of those in education and training. 30% of people in the education and training industry said their most relevant non-school qualification was at postgraduate level, while for 69% of people in the construction industry, it was below bachelor degree level. Around 34% of people who worked in retail and trade, 32% in accommodation and food services, and 35% in the transport, postal and warehousing industries had at least one qualification but none relevant to their current job.

## 26: Level of most relevant non-school qualification, by industry(a)



(a) Employed people aged 15-64 years with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 14

## Underemployment and income

Having qualifications relevant to their current job made a difference to people's rates of underemployment. People with no qualifications relevant to their current job or no qualifications at all were twice as likely to be underemployed as those with a relevant

qualification (14% and 12% respectively, compared with 6%). They were also much more likely to have lower weekly personal incomes than those with qualifications relevant to their jobs (48% and 50% respectively, compared with 23%).

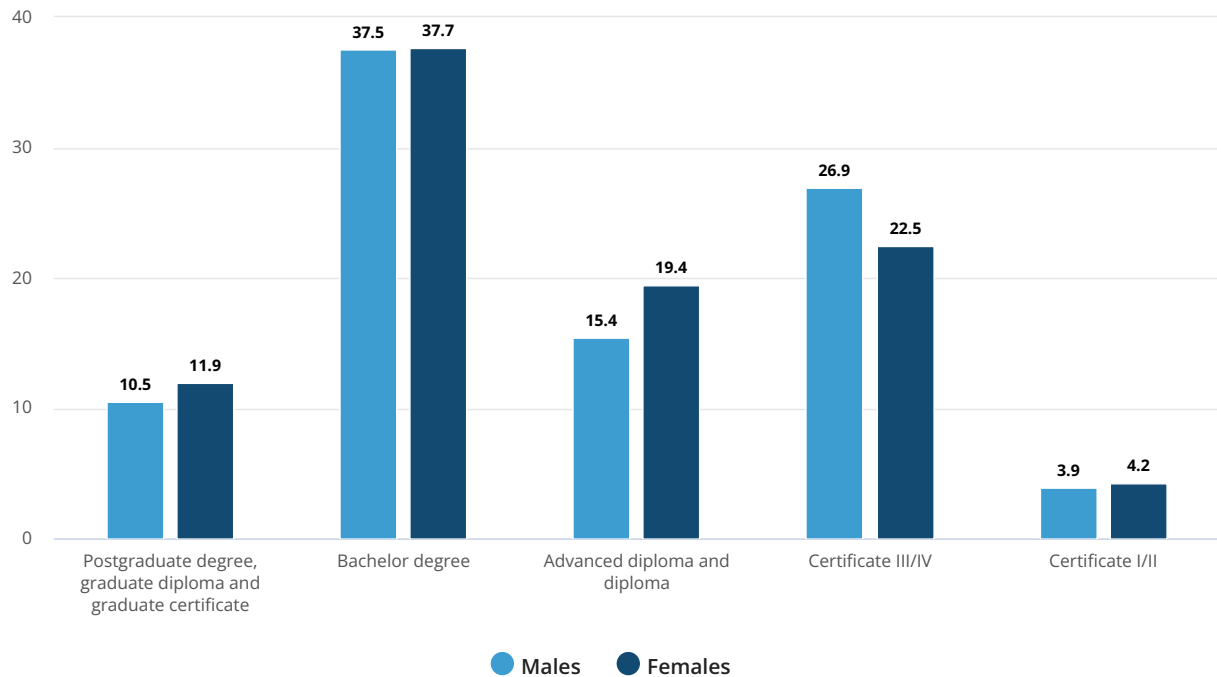
People whose most relevant non-school qualification was a bachelor degree or higher were more likely to have an income within the top two income quintiles compared with those whose most relevant non-school qualification was below a bachelor degree. Those in the highest personal income quintile were the least likely to have qualifications that were not relevant to their current job (6% compared with 25% of those in the lowest quintile and 30% of those in the second quintile).

## **Incomplete non-school qualifications**

In 2018-19, 2.6 million (16%) Australians aged 15–64 years had at least one incomplete non-school qualification, that is, they had started a certificate, diploma or degree, but stopped before completing all academic requirements. Around 2% had more than one incomplete qualification.

Women were slightly more likely to have an incomplete qualification than men (17% compared with 15%), however this fluctuated by qualification level. Around 19% of women and 15% of men had incomplete qualifications at the advanced diploma and diploma level, but more men had incomplete qualifications at the certificate III/IV level (27% compared with 23%).

## 27: Level of incomplete qualification, by sex(a)

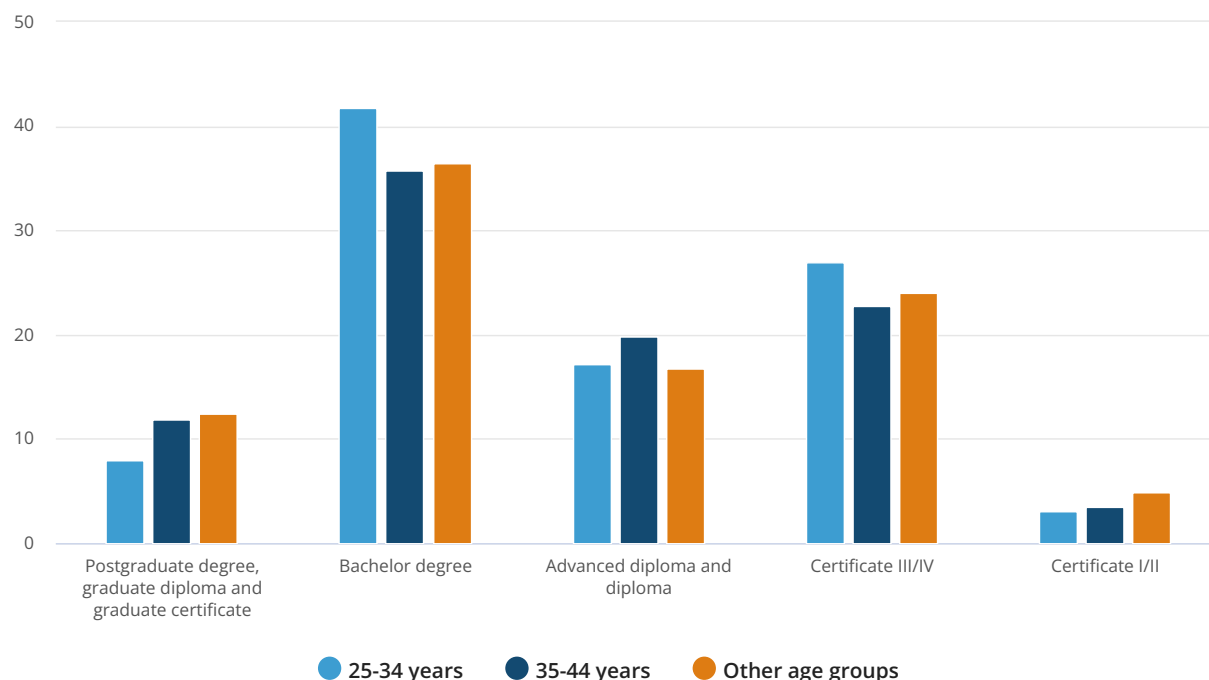


(a) People aged 15-64 years with an incomplete qualification.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 17

People aged 25 to 44 years were more likely to have an incomplete qualification than those in other age groups. More than two in five people with an incomplete qualification aged 25-34 (42%), and over a third of those aged 35-44 (36%) had started but not finished a bachelor's degree, while a further 27% and 23% respectively of people in these age groups had started but not finished a certificate III/IV.

## 28: Level of incomplete qualification, by age group(a)



(a) People aged 15-64 years with an incomplete qualification. 'Other age groups' includes people aged 15-24 and people aged 45-64 years.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 17

Unemployed people (22%) were more likely to have an incomplete qualification than employed people (16%). Around 40% of unemployed people with an incomplete qualification had started but not finished a Certificate III/IV, with a further 24% not completing a bachelor degree.

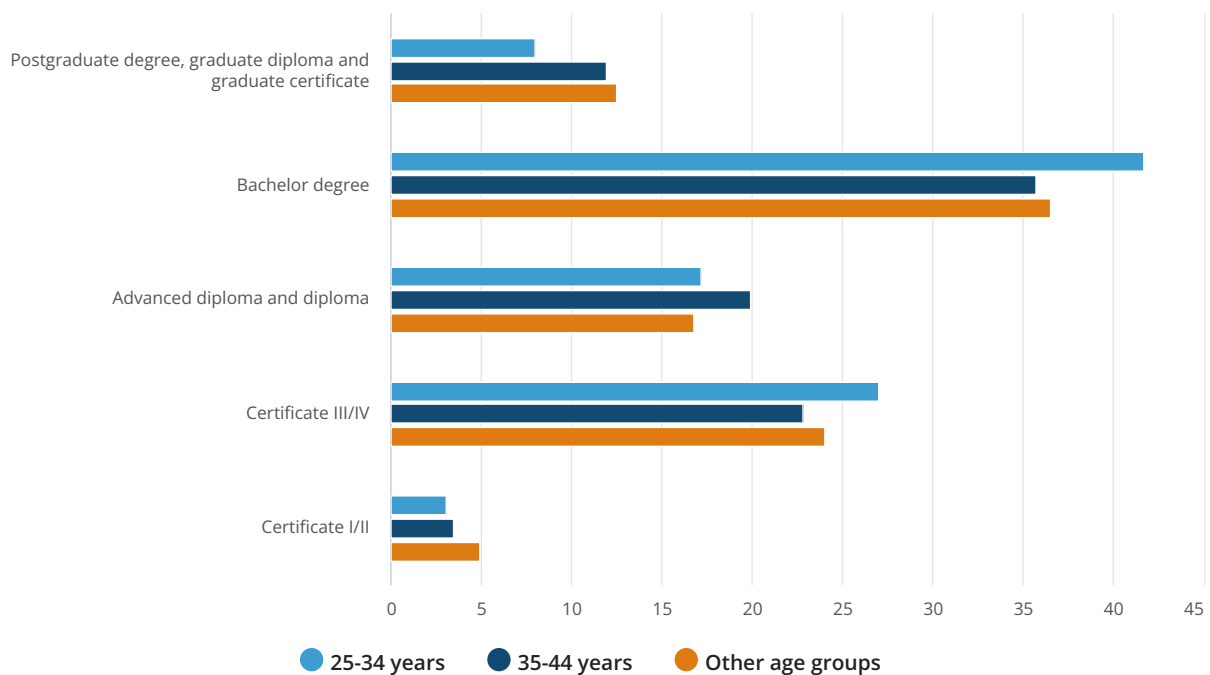
Remoteness did not appear to be a factor in whether people had incomplete qualifications, with similar proportions for people in major cities (16%), inner regional (16%), outer regional (15%), and remote or very remote areas of Australia (14%).

People who migrated to Australia as adults (that is, were aged 15 years or over when they arrived) were less likely to have an incomplete qualification (9%) than those who were born in Australia or who had migrated as children (18% each). Adult migrants were more likely to have incomplete qualifications at the postgraduate level, however (21% compared with 10%



for people born in Australia and 11% of those who had migrated as children). Just over a quarter of adult migrants with an incomplete qualification had stopped studying a bachelor degree (28%), compared with 38% of people born in Australia and 47% of child migrants.

## 29: Level of incomplete qualification by country of birth(a)



(a) People aged 15-64 years with an incomplete qualification.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 17

The more that people had studied, the more likely they were to have an incomplete qualification. People with three or more completed qualifications were the most likely to have at least one incomplete qualification (25% compared with 17% of those with two, and 15% each of those with one or no completed qualifications). Almost three in five people with both complete and incomplete qualifications had an incomplete qualification in a field that was different from the field of their highest completed qualification (59%).

## Further study

While 13% of people with an incomplete qualification were currently studying again (6%

part-time and 6% full-time), around a third of people with an incomplete qualification had already completed another qualification afterwards (32%).

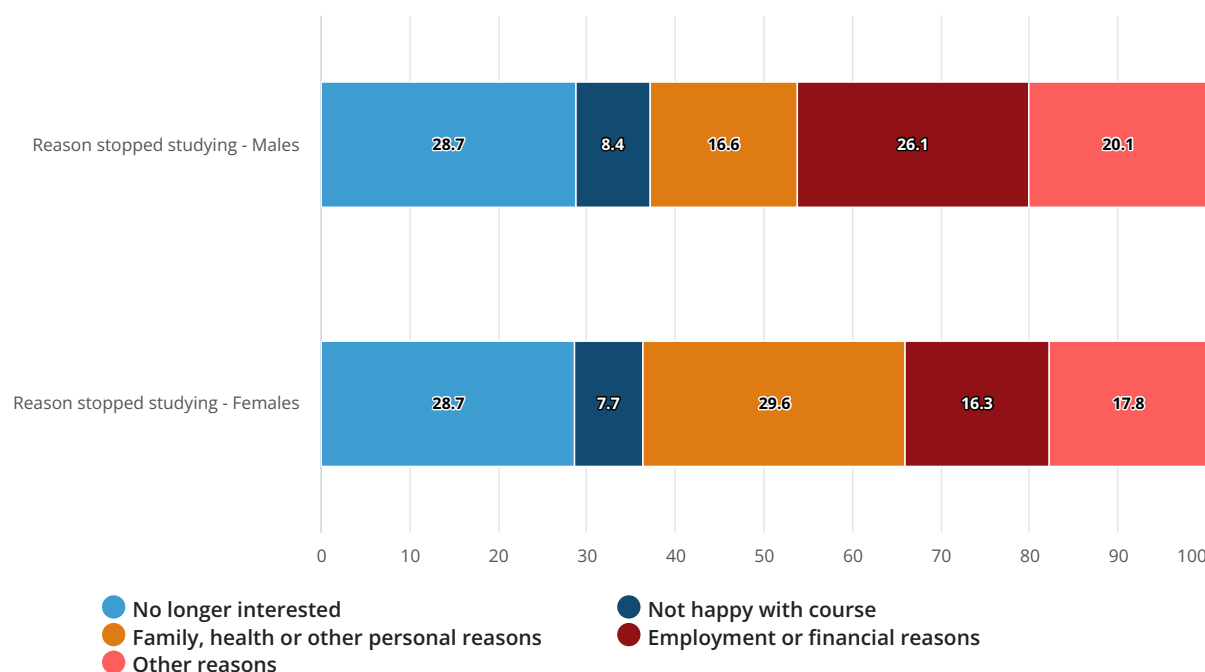
People were more likely to be employed if they had completed a qualification after their most recent incomplete qualification (84%) than if they had not (74%). Just under three in five people who had completed a qualification after stopping their most recent qualification were in the top four personal income deciles (59%), compared with 43% of those who had not gone on to study again.

## **Reasons for not completing a qualification**

Overall, reasons for not completing a qualification were more likely to be personal (51%) than course-related (42%) - that is, for family, health, financial or access reasons, rather than losing interest, failing, or the course being cancelled. The most common single reason, however, was no longer being interested in the course (29%), followed by family, health and other personal reasons (24%), and employment or financial reasons (21%).

Women were more likely to stop studying for family, health or other personal reasons than men, while men were more likely to stop for employment and financial reasons.

### 30: Main reason stopped studying, by sex(a)(b)



(a) People aged 15-64 years with an incomplete qualification.

(b) Other reasons include the institution closed or the course was cancelled, failed course or it was too difficult, completed sufficient study to meet needs, person or course moved locations, or distance to travel and other reasons

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 18

Young people with incomplete qualifications were more likely than older people to have stopped studying because they were no longer interested in the course (39% of 15-24 year olds and 37% of 25 to 34 year olds, compared with 23% of people aged 35 to 64). Around one in five 15-24 year olds stopped studying for family, health or personal reasons, while 10% stopped because they were not happy with the course.

People with an incomplete qualification were more likely to have completed another qualification afterwards if the reason for the incomplete qualification was course related rather than personal (54% compared with 40%).

## Qualifications of adult migrants

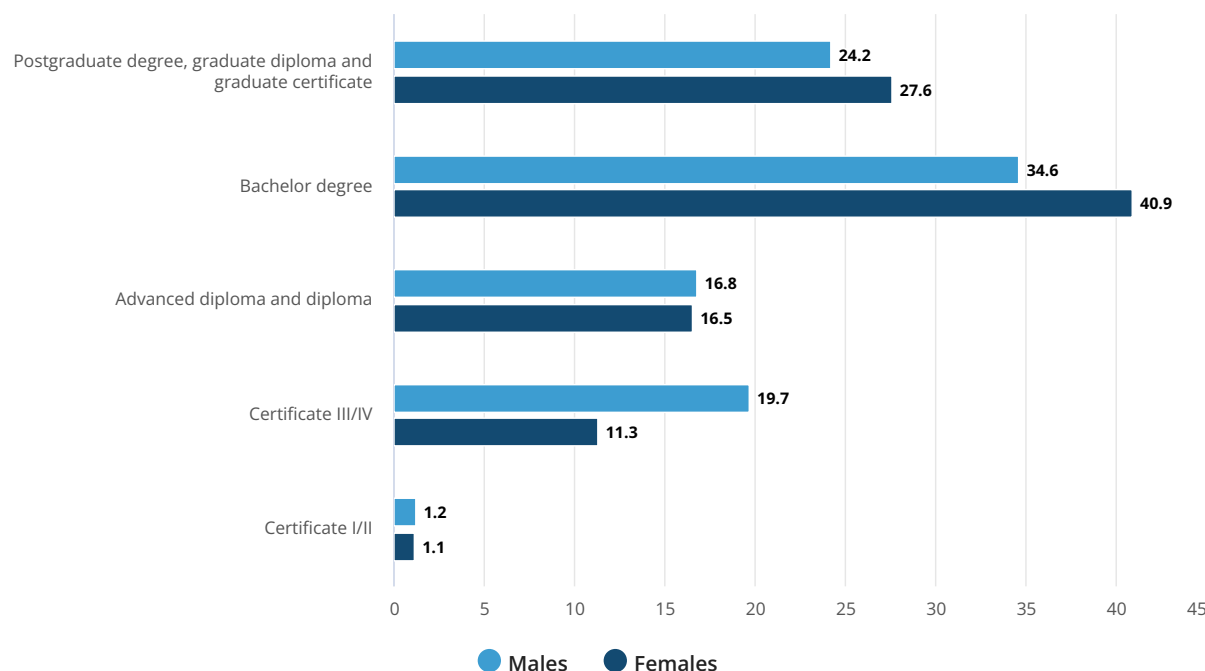
As of 2018-19, there were 3.7 million Australians aged 15-64 years who had moved to Australia as adults (that is, were aged 15 years or over when they arrived). Three quarters of these adult migrants (75%) had at least one non-school qualification, compared with 63% of the total Australian population in this age group. Just under a third (31%) had multiple qualifications, compared with one in four (24%) of the total population.

Almost one in five adult migrants (19%) had a qualification above bachelor level (postgraduate degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate), while 28% had a bachelor degree. One in four (25%) had no qualifications.

Adult migrants who were currently aged between 25 and 44 were more likely to have at least one qualification than those who were younger or older - 82% of those aged 25-34 years and 83% of those aged 35-44 had at least one qualification, compared with 46% of 15-24 year olds, and 63% of 55-64 year olds.

Of adult migrants, men were more likely than women to have three or more qualifications (9% compared with 7%). However, women were more likely to have qualifications at bachelor level or above, and men were more likely to have a Certificate III or IV.

### 31: Adult migrants: level of highest non-school qualification, by sex(a)



(a) Adult migrants with one or more non-school qualifications

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 20

A smaller proportion of adult migrants had an incomplete qualification (9%) than people who migrated as children or who were born in Australia (18% each).

### Qualifications by level, field and time since arrival

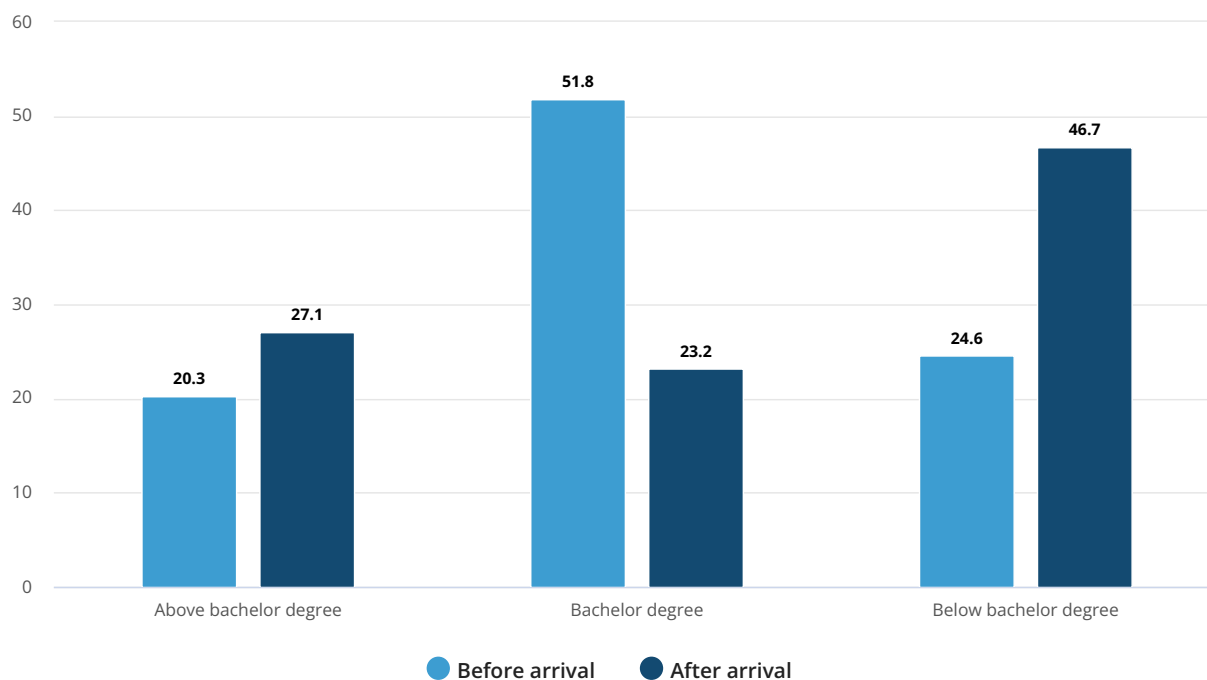
Overall, around 45% of adult migrants had at least one qualification already when they arrived in Australia, and 42% attained one (or another one) after arrival.

Of the 55% of adult migrants who had arrived with no qualifications, more than half completed a qualification after arrival (54%). Just over a quarter (28%) of those who arrived with a qualification went on to complete further formal studies.

The most common highest qualification completed before arrival was a bachelor degree (52% of adult migrants with a qualification attained before arrival), while the most common completed after arrival was below bachelor level (47% of those with a qualification attained

after arrival).

### 32: Level of highest non-school qualification completed before and after arrival(a)

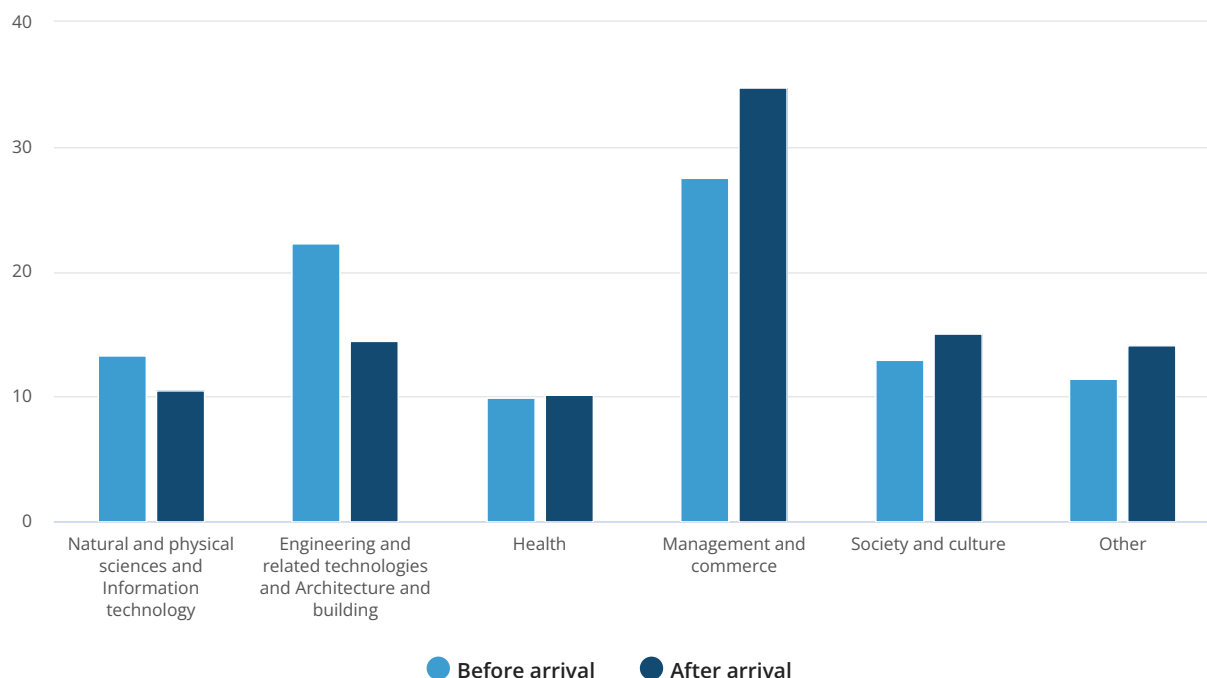


(a) Adult migrants with one or more non-school qualifications completed before arrival and those who completed one or more after arrival.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

The most common field of adult migrants' highest non-school qualifications was management and commerce, accounting for 28% of qualifications attained before arrival and 35% of those attained afterwards. The next most common field was engineering and related technologies/architecture and building, for qualifications attained before arrival (10%).

### 33: Field of highest non-school qualification completed before and after arrival(a)



(a) Adult migrants with one or more non-school qualifications completed before arrival and those who completed one or more after arrival.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Customised data

Adult migrants arriving ten or more years ago were less likely to have migrated to Australia with a qualification (61%) than those who migrated less than five years ago (43%). More than three quarters (77%) of adult migrants arriving within the last 5 years had not attained a qualification since their arrival, while around half (51%) of those arriving ten or more years ago had attained at least one qualification since their arrival.

Overall, migrants arriving more than ten years ago were slightly more likely to have at least one qualification than those arriving within the last 5 years (76% compared with 70%), as well as to have three or more qualifications (9% compared with 5%).

### Qualifications and labour force status

Around 82% of adult migrants with a qualification were employed, compared with 59% of

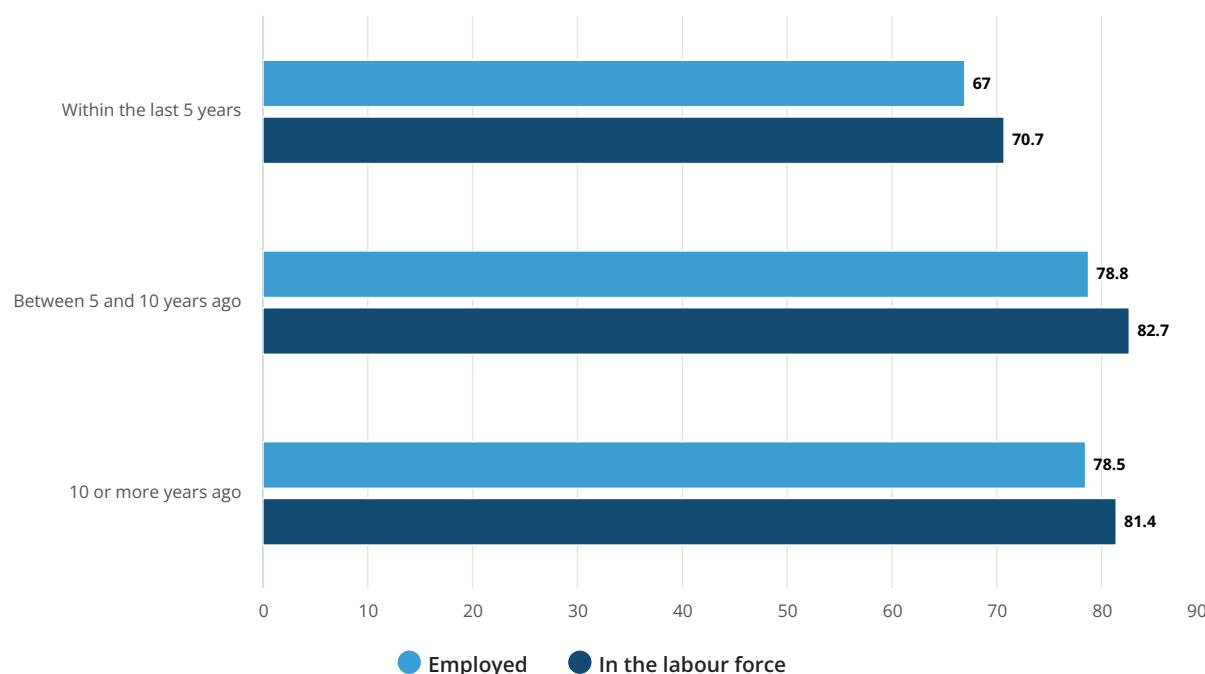
those without one. The difference between those with and without qualifications was lower for male adult migrants, at 89% and 71% respectively (a difference of 18 percentage points), than it was for female adult migrants (75% and 47% respectively, a difference of 28 percentage points). As with the total population, female adult migrants were less likely to be in the labour force altogether (with 28% not in the labour force, compared with 13% of male adult migrants).

Adult migrants who had attained a Certificate III or IV as their highest qualification before arriving in Australia were slightly more likely than those arriving with higher qualifications to be employed (91%, compared with 79% of those arriving with an advanced diploma or diploma, 83% of those arriving with a bachelor degree, and 80% of those with a degree above bachelor level). Where a person's highest qualification had been completed after arrival, those with a degree above bachelor level were more likely to be employed than those with a bachelor degree (86% compared with 80%).

Adult migrants who had arrived in Australia within the last five years were a little less likely to be employed (67%) or in the labour force (71%) than those who had been in Australia for longer.



### 34: Adult migrants: Labour force status, by time since arrival(a)



(a) Adult migrants with one or more non-school qualifications

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 21

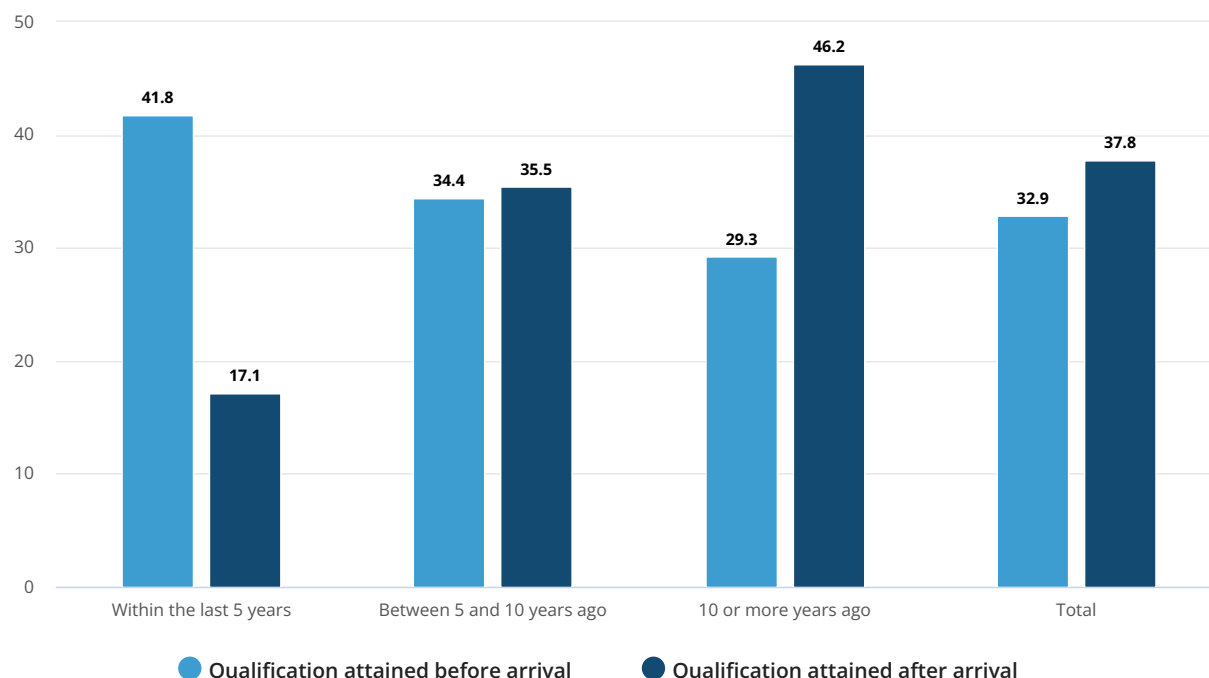
Adult migrants with no qualifications were more likely to be neither employed nor studying than those who had completed a qualification (27%, compared with 14% of those who completed a qualification before arrival, and 12% of those who completed one after arrival).

#### Relevance of qualifications to current job

Around three quarters (75%) of employed adult migrants with one or more qualifications were working in the field of their highest qualification or it was relevant to their current job.

Adult migrants who completed their highest qualification before coming to Australia were less likely than those who completed it afterwards to be working in the field of that qualification (33% compared with 38%).

### 35: Adult migrants working in field of highest qualification, by time since



(a) Employed adult migrants with one or more non-school qualifications.

Source: Qualifications and Work, Australia 2018-19, Table 23

Around 79% of employed adult migrants reported they had a qualification that was relevant to their current job, with 67% working in the field of their most relevant qualification, and 11% not working in the field but their most relevant qualification was at least somewhat relevant to their current job.

Employed adult migrants were less likely to be working in the field of their most relevant qualification than people who were born in Australia or those who arrived before the age of 15 (67% compared with 74% and 73% respectively).

Employed people with Australian citizenship were more likely to be working in the field of their most relevant qualification than those who were not Australian citizens (74% compared with 62%).

Employed Australians who only spoke English at home were more likely to be working in the

field of their most relevant qualification than those who spoke a language other than English at home (74% compared with 66%).

## Data downloads

### Data downloads

---

#### Qualifications and work 2018-19 Excel Data Tables

↓ [Download XLSX](#)  
[573.96 KB]

---

#### Qualifications and work 2018-19 Excel Zip Data Tables

↓ [Download ZIP](#)  
[517.45 KB]

---

#### Qualifications and work 2018-19 Excel Data Item List

↓ [Download XLS](#)  
[1.13 MB]

---

#### Qualifications and work 2018-19 Excel Zip Data Item List

↓ [Download ZIP](#)  
[161.01 KB]

---

## Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 4235.0

## Methodology

[Qualifications and work methodology, 2018-19 financial year](#)